Saint Athanasius lived in the fourth century and was the Bishop of Alexandria in Egypt for 46 years. Banned from his diocese at least five times, he spent a total of 17 years in exile. The famous convert to the Church, John Henry Cardinal Newman, described him as a "principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world." Often referred to as the Champion of Orthodoxy, Saint Athanasius was undoubtedly one of the most courageous defenders of the faith in the entire history of the Church. If anyone can be singled out as a saint for our times, surely it is Saint Athanasius. The following letter of his could, almost word for word, have been written yesterday:

Letter of St. Athanasius
To His Flock

MAY GOD CONSOLE YOU! . . . WHAT SADDENS YOU . . . IS THE FACT THAT OTHERS HAVE OCCUPIED THE CHURCHES BY VIOLENCE, WHILE DURING THIS TIME YOU ARE ON THE OUTSIDE. IT IS A FACT THAT THEY HAVE THE PREMISES---BUT YOU HAVE THE APOSTOLIC FAITH. THEY CAN OCCUPY OUR CHURCHES, BUT THEY ARE OUTSIDE THE TRUE FAITH. YOU REMAIN OUTSIDE THE PLACES OF WORSHIP, BUT THE FAITH DWELLS WITHIN YOU. LET US CONSIDER: WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT, THE PLACE OR THE FAITH? THE TRUE FAITH, OBVIOUSLY. WHO HAS LOST AND WHO HAS WON IN THIS STRUGGLE---THE ONE WHO KEEPS THE PREMISES OR THE ONE WHO KEEPS THE FAITH?

TRUE, THE PREMISES ARE GOOD WHEN THE APOSTOLIC FAITH IS PREACHED THERE; THEY ARE HOLY IF EVERYTHING TAKES PLACE THERE IN A HOLY WAY . . .

YOU ARE THE ONES WHO ARE HAPPY: YOU WHO REMAIN WITHIN THE CHURCH BY YOUR FAITH, WHO HOLD FIRMLY TO THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH WHICH HAS COME DOWN TO YOU FROM APOSTOLIC TRADITION. AND IF AN EXECRABLE JEALOUSY HAS TRIED TO SHAKE IT ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, IT HAS NOT SUCCEEDED. THEY ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE BROKEN AWAY FROM IT IN THE PRESENT CRISIS.

NO ONE, EVER, WILL PREVAIL AGAINST YOUR FAITH, BELOVED BROTHERS. AND WE BELIEVE THAT GOD WILL GIVE US OUR CHURCHES BACK SOME DAY.

THUS, THE MORE VIOLENTLY THEY TRY TO OCCUPY THE PLACES OF WORSHIP, THE MORE THEY SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THE CHURCH. THEY CLAIM THAT THEY REPRESENT THE CHURCH; BUT IN REALITY, THEY ARE THE ONES WHO ARE EXPELLING THEMSELVES FROM IT AND GOING ASTRAY.

EVEN IF CATHOLICS FAITHFUL TO TRADITION ARE REDUCED TO A HANDFUL, THEY ARE THE ONES WHO ARE THE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST. (Emphasis added)

(Coll. selecta SS. Eccl. Patrum, Caillau and Guillou Vol. 32, pp. 411-412)

C-A-T-H-O-L-I-C-S -- B-E I-N-F-O-R-M-E-D !

ASK QUESTIONS - (no one can blame you for that) - and you could be in for some surprises. You know that to have MASS you must have a PRIEST - VALIDLY ORDAINED.

DID YOU KNOW that the rite of ordination to the Priesthood was changed in 1969?

Have you ever read through the new rite?

Why is it careful not to say clearly and plainly what could be said, should be said, and used to be said in a Catholic ordination ceremony?

YOU KNOW that a Catholic Priest is ordained ESPECIALLY and PRIMARILY to offer the Sacrifice of the MASS.

WHY IS IT THEN that in the new rite of ordination the word "M-A-S-S" never occurs, not even once?

DO YOU KNOW that the new rite gives NO POWER WHATEVER to perform any priestly function?

See if you can find any POWER given to offer MASS, to forgive sins, to bless, to consecrate.

THE FORMER RITE HAD THIS: "Receive the power to offer sacrifice to God, and to celebrate MASS for the living and the dead."

Here is the new rite: "Accept the gifts from the people to be offered to God."

THE FORMER RITE HAD: "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained."

The new rite has ---------- N-O-T-H-I-N-G ! ! !

THE FORMER RITE HAD: "Give your servants the dignity of the Priesthood".

The new rite has: "Give your servants the dignity of the presbyterate."

Why "presbyterate"? Why not the plain Catholic word "PRIESTHOOD"?

Is he being ordained an "elder", an "overseer" or even a bishop? The dictionary gives all these meanings - but nowhere any meaning of "sacrificing Priest".

Is this un-Catholic "inaccuracy" a gesture in the cause of today's false ecumenism?

Why have all these specifically Catholic aspects of the Priesthood been cut out?

What is the new rite really intended to do? To hand on the traditional Catholic Priesthood in some carefully-concealed way? Or simply to pretend to do so - while in reality investing a "president of the assembly" to perform "sacred rites" which will not include the Catholic Sacrifice of the MASS?

SO, taking account of the Church's own rules for valid ordination, could any man ordained according to the new rite ever claim, much less prove, that he is a Catholic Priest with the powers belonging to that Priesthood?

It's a good question. It requires a serious answer.

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