

Author's Preface

I BEGAN WORK on this book when I was thirteen years old.

It was the First Sunday of Advent, 29 November 1964. I had just finished serving for the first Mass offered in my parish according to the new rules laid down by the Ecumenical Council. The “new liturgy” (as it was then called) struck me as strange and a little disrespectful. I didn't like it.

I mention this at the outset because in traditionalist circles I am well known as a sedevacantist. But ages before that, the changes in the Mass left me uneasy — and it is these changes, not sedevacantism, that are the topic of this book.

From that first fateful November day onwards (it seemed to my young eyes), everything in the liturgy and in the Church began to fall apart. The next year, in September 1965, I entered a minor seminary, and during the twelve years that followed until my priestly ordination, I observed up close and from the inside the destruction of the Mass and the attacks against the Catholic faith that followed in the wake of Vatican II.

Even from my first year in the seminary high school, I wanted to be part of the battle. I threw myself into studying organ and musical composition so I could fight against the trash (folk, pop, spirituals, recordings) that was just starting to replace sacred music at Mass. I read books on the liturgy, attended conservative conferences and subscribed to publications (*The Wanderer, Triumph*) that denounced the desacralization of the liturgy and the soon ubiquitous modernist heresies.

As my musical abilities developed, I sought out employment in parishes where the clergy were more conservative, and where I would be free to use only music written in a traditional style. Once the Mass of Paul VI appeared in 1969, I immersed myself in learning the new rules that came with it, so that in my work as a church musician I would be able to choose the most “traditional” options that the new rite allowed.

For the first ten of those years, I believed (or perhaps just hoped) that the causes for the devastation I witnessed were to be found not in what the pope and the council *actually* prescribed and taught, but rather in the violations of liturgical law and misinterpretations of Conciliar teaching promoted by “liberals” everywhere. If priests just followed the rubrics for the new liturgy and hewed strictly to Vatican II's teachings, the Mass would be reverent and the faith would be protected.

The reform itself was not the problem; the neo-modernists were.