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**DOM PROSPER GUERANGER
(1805-1875)
AND HIS LITURGICAL ACTIVITY
A pioneer of the liturgical movement**

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INTRODUCTION

Dom Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger (1805-1875), the first Abbot of Solesmes, the mother house of the French Benedictine Congregation, was among the most distinguished ecclesiastical figures of the nineteenth century. He was in his time and ever since the subject of severe criticism and praise. His influence rests with us to-day, not only by his monumental liturgical work, but by the existence of the Solesmes Congregation which thrives not only in France but in many other countries.

The author's personal motivations in elaborating these few chapters was to study in reasonable depth the origins of the liturgical movement which received its consecration in the reforms of Saint Pius X, Pius XII and of the Second Vatican Council. In the light of much current controversy surrounding the liturgy and its meaning in the Church of the 20th century, it is necessary to discover the thought of Guéranger and its influence on the liturgical movement. To know something of the work of Guéranger is a good beginning of a lifetime's study of the sacred liturgy, especially for a future pastor who must edify the people of God to a true understanding of the sacred mysteries, that they may encounter the Incarnate Christ and find eternal beatitude.

Dom Guéranger was a man of his time, so it is necessary to place him in his historical context. As a liturgical theologian, he was at the same time scientific and pastoral, his work had much influence on the whole Church and has much to teach the Church to-day. The plan for this study follows exactly this, to expose the different aspects of Guéranger's life and work, then to make an evaluation of his intuitions and weaknesses and a reflection of his relevance in the Church of modern times. Following this plan, source material has been collected to expose these different aspects. With reading this literature and with the fruit of personal experience and reflection, the chapters have been written in a spirit of sincerity and objectivity. Much of the factual information has been taken from the scholarly books of Dom Cuthbert Johnson and Dom Louis Soltner. Encyclopaedia articles and books of general Church history have been of much use, and of course a few of the works of Guéranger of which the most important extracts are incorporated in the main text books. An attempt has been made to make a fresh approach to Guéranger's work, and much has been learnt in making this short study.

1. DOM GUERANGER IN HIS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1.1. The situation of the Church in France of the nineteenth century

The Church in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century took the appearance of a devastated vineyard in the wake of the Revolution of 1789. This period marked the development of much renewed theological, political and artistic thought. Since the Concordat with Napoleon (1801), the Church was tolerated in France despite the loss of her pre-revolutionary glory. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Romantic movement was born, a reaction from the rationalism of the Enlightenment. This tendency influenced Francois-Rene Chateaubriand (1782-1854) and Hugo-Felicite-Robert de Lamennais (1782-1854), who in turn were to influence Dom Prosper Guéranger.

The great drama of this time was the struggle between Gallicanism and the newly revived Ultramontanist movement. It is interesting to note that Gallicanism is associated with the rationalism of the "ancien regime", whilst the reactionary Ultramontanist movement, marked for its loyalty to the Roman Pontiff, came to be associated with Romanticism.

Ultramontanism in France had political overtones, to wit, with the Restoration movement. The "throne and altar" alliance became an important hallmark of ultramontanist thinking. This movement was chiefly inspired by two political philosophers: Count Joseph-Marie de Maistre (1753-1821) and Count Louis de Bonald (1754-1840)¹. Tradition was interpreted politically, and a distinction came to be drawn between *légitimiste* tradition and "revolutionary" reason. It was necessary that the Pope's rule over the Church be absolute and also that of the King over the temporal estate. This was very much the doctrine of Boniface VIII (+ 1303) concerning the "two swords".

It is from this context that Dom Guéranger's thought was formed, but what can be said concerning the state of the Church's liturgy in France at the time? What Dom Guéranger reacted against was a gradual degradation from the purity and integrity of the Roman liturgy, mainly by the influence of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Baroque mentality was a product of three main factors: the aesthetic world of neo-paganism, the humanistic movement and the post-Tridentine reaction against Protestantism². The liturgy had been influenced by three centuries of secular culture since the reform of St. Pius V (1566-1572).

The Roman liturgy had been in use in the French dioceses during the Church's short period of autonomy from the Crown between 1580 and 1610³.

But, during the course of the seventeenth century, the dioceses of France began to abandon the Roman rite in favour of their own diocesan usages, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Roman rite had been effectively banished from the whole of France. These local rites came to be known as *neo-Gallican*, as they were certainly not true Gallican rites.

¹ Heyer F., *The Catholic Church from 1648-1870*, London 1969, p 132.

² Bouyer L., *Life and Liturgy*, London 1956, pp 5-7.

³ Martimort A. G., *L'Eglise en Prière*, vol I, Tournai 1984, p 82.

Dom Guéranger treats these local liturgies in great detail in the *Institutions liturgiques* which will be described in greater detail further on. He speaks of the gradual reform of the Ritual, the Breviary, and finally of the Missal. In fact these rites, far from being truly Gallican, were but modern reforms of the Roman rite, bearing very little resemblance to the ancient Gallican liturgies. They removed from the rites all non-scriptural passages. Each bishop, and in some cases, each priest, took it upon himself to reform his own liturgy, and the result was a marked departure from tradition. It is said that when priests were imprisoned together during the Revolution of 1789, they could not recite the Office together, because the few breviaries they had between them were not of the same rite.

This situation was linked with Jansenism and Gallicanism, for the one thing these liturgies had in common was a rejection of the authority of Rome. The tendency of these reformers was to remove any sense of mystery or symbolism that was not strictly functional. The ordinary lay-folk had long since ceased to live the liturgy and had resorted to private devotions, sometimes of a somewhat superstitious nature. Henceforth, the liturgy was to be mutilated according to the whim of each reformer. This is inevitable if the liturgy is no longer regarded as the prayer of Christ in his Church. The liturgy was to become just another private devotion or a beautiful theatrical spectacle.

At the Revolution of 1789, the structures of the Church were utterly destroyed and replaced by a Constitutional Church. The liturgy was adapted to the grotesque cult of the Goddess of Reason and further mutilated. The Synod of Pistoia (1786) had great influence on the new French liturgies; it was condemned at the time by Pius VI by the Bull *Auctorem fidei* (1794).

This sad situation was inherited by the French Church of the early nineteenth century, and was bewailed by many of the new Romantic and Ultramontanist school of thought. Chateaubriand wrote two renowned works at this time, *Le genie du Christianisme* (1802) and *Les martyrs, ou Le triomphe de la religion* (1809) in which he revealed to the French his vision of the marvels of the medieval liturgy. It was into this arena that Dom Prosper Guéranger stepped.

1.2. The life and career of Dom Guéranger

Prosper-Louis-Pascal Guéranger was born on the 4th April 1805 in Sable-sur-Sarthe in the Diocese of Le Mans. He studied at the Royal College of Angers from 1818, went to junior seminary in 1822 and entered the major seminary of Le Mans in 1823. He was ordained priest at Tours on the 7th October 1827 and was made secretary to his Bishop, Mgr Claude-Madeleine de la Myre-Mory and Canon of the Cathedral of Le Mans. In 1829, Guéranger followed his retired and infirm bishop to Paris, where the venerable old man died in the same year. The Archbishop of Paris, Mgr de Quéln confided to Guéranger the administration of the church of the Foreign Missions. In this position of great independence, he was able to devote himself to study and writing. It is during this period that he met Philippe Gerbet and de Lamennais, whose anti-Gallican attitudes pleased him.

Between 1830 and 1831, he produced his first written works, articles in the review of Lamennais entitled *Le Mémorial catholique*. The four articles were known as *Considerations sur la liturgie catholique* responding to a defence of the old particular liturgies. We see here that Guéranger's thought was already formed in favour of the authentic Roman liturgy. In

1831, he published a tract on the election and nomination of bishops. Here we see a sign of his ultramontanist thinking which can be attributed to his contact with de Lamennais⁴.

Guéranger had a greater inspiration, which was to restore the Benedictine life in France, where monasticism was no longer seen as a *useful* way of life. This calling had been in Guéranger's thoughts since his seminary days. The community of Solesmes was founded in 1833.

From 1840, Guéranger began to work on his two great opera, the *Institutions liturgiques* and *l'Année liturgique*. The first volume of the *Institutions liturgiques* appeared in 1840, the second in 1841 and the third in 1851. He started work on the *Année liturgique* in 1841. This was a work destined not for theologians but for the Catholic laity to arouse a long-lost interest in the liturgy. He wrote only nine of the volumes; the other six were later written by Dom Lucien Fromage of Solesmes.

Guéranger was attacked by several French bishops for the opinions expressed in his *Institutions liturgiques*, and he responded to these charges by writing his *Défense des Institutions liturgiques* in 1854, in form of a letter addressed to the Bishop of Toulouse. A little earlier, in 1850, he was invited by Mgr Louis-Edmond Pie (1815-1880)⁵ to write a theological work on the Immaculate Conception, which was to be solemnly defined as a dogma of the Faith four years later by Pius IX. In 1851, Guéranger was named consulter of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and of the Index. From 1853 to the beginning of the First Vatican Council, he was responsible for more monastic foundations.

Guéranger was much involved in the great controversy of the time, the battle between the Conciliarists and the Papalists over the issue of the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff. He was unable for reasons of health to participate in the preparations of the Vatican Council of 1870, but he wrote many polemical tracts and works from Solesmes. He was definitely on the Papalist side, publishing in 1870 *De la monarchie pontificale*, indicating reasons for the first definitions concerning the primacy and infallibility of the Pope⁶. Pius IX personally thanked him for this tract which refuted the views of Henri Maret and Felix Dupanloup⁷.

A great passion of Dom Guéranger was the music of the Church, Gregorian chant. His great aim was to purify it of post-medieval accretions, and to restore it to its primitive splendour. This was the great work of Solesmes, which has influenced nearly the whole of the Latin Church, and the endless work of research continues to this day.

After a long, saintly and hard-working life, Dom Guéranger died on the 30th January 1875.

It is impossible in this brief work to do full justice to this extraordinary man. A brief *curriculum vitae* is far from sufficient even to give an idea of his personality and spirituality.

⁴ Hourlier J., *Guéranger*, in : *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol VI, Paris 1967, col. 1097.

⁵ Pie was Bishop of Poitiers from 1849-1880. He contributed much to the definition of Papal infallibility at Vatican I (1870).

⁶ Franquerie, Marquis de la, *L'infailibilité pontificale*, Vouille 1973, p 13.

⁷ Butler C, *The Vatican Council*, London 1961, p 448. Felix Dupanloup (1802-1878) was Bishop of Orleans, a notable preacher. Henri Maret was Dean of the Catholic faculty of the Sorbonne and titular Bishop of Sura. They were both against the definition of Papal infallibility: Dupanloup was an inopportunist and Maret was a Gallican.

He was an utterly tenacious and devoted man, determined to restore the Roman liturgy in his own monastery and in the Latin Church. He was totally faithful to his vocation as a Catholic in his loyalty to the Successor of St. Peter and to the Tradition. He realised his vocation as a monk in the School of St. Benedict, as a faithful servant of the monks he governed. A man very much of his time, he was ferocious in combat, but never lacked the leaven of charity. He was at all times courteous, a gentleman. He was not a great administrator, but showed great strength and solidity in his spiritual life and intellect⁸.

What made Guéranger act as he did, and why did he choose to revive an outmoded way of life? Could he not have restored the liturgy as a diocesan priest?

1.3. The restoration of the Benedictine Order in France

The fact that Dom Guéranger restored the Benedictine life in France has been mentioned, but it is now necessary to discuss how and why he did so. Guéranger was not merely interested in liturgical archaeology; he wished to live the liturgy in its fulness. In the conditions of his time, this was impossible as a diocesan priest, especially as he had to deal with a rather intolerant bishop. It had been his desire since his seminary days to be a Benedictine monk in his own country. As the Order no longer existed in France, and the old monks had gone into exile or had returned to living as laymen, Guéranger had no choice but to re-found a monastery against all possible opposition. He was to meet this opposition from both Church and State.

1.3.1. The reasons for the foundation

We can wonder what inspired him to live the monastic life. It was his desire to give his life to God in the contemplative life, in the prayer of the Church which is the Sacred Liturgy. He would have been aware that his soul thirsted for continual union with God in liturgical and contemplative prayer. But, there was another side to this fervent desire for the monastic life; it embodied the ideal of the old undivided Church of before the Reformation and the Enlightenment. He was what we might call in our own day a *medievalist*, who saw the best of the Church in the early Middle Ages, the period of the foundation of the great religious Orders and the Age of Faith. Guéranger was a Romantic as was Keats, Shelley, Beethoven or Schubert.

He was much motivated by his reaction against the exaggerations of the *ancien régime*, against Jansenism and Gallicanism. He formulated a spiritual doctrine in which he emphasised three points: the christian life, the monastic life and the liturgical life⁹. These points represented his reaction against Jansenism, Gallicanism and a general indifference towards the pure beauty of the liturgy. He put an accent on the presence of sanctifying grace in the soul and practice of the precepts of our Lord¹⁰. Love of God was of capital importance for Guéranger, and he made fidelity to the Roman Church a strong point as a sign of fidelity to God. He prescribed practice of the Sacraments to the faithful, especially that of frequent communion. In this regard, he anticipated the teaching of St. Pius X who invited small children to Holy Communion.

⁸ Hourlier, op cit., col. 1099.

⁹ Ibid., col. 1100.

¹⁰ Guéranger P., *Notions sur la vie religieuse et monastique*, Solesmes 1885, pp 49-59.

For Guéranger, the best prayer was that of the Church, the Mass and the Divine Office: *Ergo nihil operi Dei praeponatur*¹¹. His reaction to the exaggerated rigorism of the Jansenists shows in him the moderation of St. Benedict. For Guéranger, the reality of the Church was monasticism, the profound imitation of Christ, a sign of the eschatological life, and what is the liturgy but a sign of that life of beatitude? Guéranger's monastic life was conceived as entirely contemplative, gratuitous: separation from the world, the daily celebration of the *Opus Dei* and manual labour. He put great emphasis on the common life, which with very few exceptions is the only way for man to live, hence the importance of this in the Rule of St. Benedict.

Having examined some of the motives of Guéranger's vocation in the light of his spiritual doctrine and love of beauty, it remains to be seen how he set about actually restoring the monastic life in France, and with what ideals in mind. Dom Guéranger was not merely content with the study of ancient liturgical texts; he restored the liturgy in practice. This was perhaps the most important point of the restoration, that the monks were to celebrate the liturgy in its fulness, understand its mysteries and live them. The restoration of the liturgy went together with that of the monastery.

1.3.2. The origins of the Abbey of Solesmes

Guéranger had read in the press about an old Maurist priory which had come onto the market. He had known this ancient building since his childhood days, and now in 1831, the idea came to him to buy the priory and refound the religious life. Dissolved at the Revolution, the priory was sold to Henri Lenoir de Chantelou, who wished to preserve the beautiful medieval statues in the church which were sought after by the prefect of the Sarthe. The priory was again sold to three rich landowners who put the building to all kinds of uses, and now the profiteers thought of dispersing the treasures of the priory and demolishing the church in order to use the stone for other purposes. Concerned by this immanent danger to the priory, Guéranger decided to unite a few young priests and to buy the priory in order to found a community. The purchase was made in 1831, and in 1833, he and his companions took possession of the priory. Conditions for founding monasteries were not favorable at this time; the shock waves of the Revolution had not yet settled down, and the State still forbade monastic vows as being promises contrary to the natural rights of man¹². Monasticism was considered to be an outmoded and useless way of life to modern society.

Right from the beginning, the house was to be one of prayer and study, but it was necessary to seek ecclesiastical approval of the project, so the first to approach was the Ordinary, Mgr Carron. The bishop was not opposed to the refounding of a monastery, but he had a different idea of the monastic life. Knowing of Guéranger's ideas, Carron decided to await the decision of Rome concerning liberalism and the ideas of de Lamennais. On the 15th August 1832, the Encyclical *Mirari vos* was promulgated by Gregory XVI condemning de Lamennais, and Guéranger wrote to his bishop showing his adhesion to its contents. This marked the end of his relations with de Lamennais. This act of fidelity to Rome won confidence for Guéranger, and it was now necessary to occupy the priory.

¹¹ Rule of St. Benedict, Chapter 43.

¹² Soltner L., *Solesmes et Dom Guéranger*, Solesmes 1974, pp 27-28. Ibid., p 28 § 4.

After this first little difficulty, the community was approved by Mgr Carron as a regular association under the authority of the Diocese of Le Mans. It was not yet a true Benedictine community, but they lived under the Rule of St. Benedict as a kind of pious union of secular priests. For the first three years, they did not wear monastic habits but ordinary clerical cassocks. Firstly, they wore capes with pointed hoods over the cassock, and in 1836, they began to wear the full monastic habit with tunic, scapular and leather belt. They had much work to do to restore the ancient building which had fallen into disrepair. They sang the full monastic Office daily in choir.

It was necessary for the community to become true monks, and for this, Guéranger needed the approval of Rome. For the Constitutions, many ideas were taken from the extinct Maurist and Cluniac congregations¹³, but for political reasons, it was not possible to re-found either of the two ancient orders. Guéranger started his journey to Rome on the 12th February 1837, and arrived in the Eternal City on the 25th March. He had to convince the redoubtable Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, who was not very favourable to the proliferation of new communities in France. Guéranger insisted on independence from diocesan authority, that he would do nothing without his monastic independence¹⁴. Guéranger was granted an audience with Gregory XVI on the 11th April, and it became clear that the old Congregation of St. Maur could not be restored. The solution was to found a new Congregation, of France. The verdict was given very quickly, and not only was the project approved, but the priory of Solesmes was raised to the dignity of an Abbey, and Guéranger was named its Abbot and Superior General of the Congregation of France, but the perpetuity of his position was not to become effective until after nine years. It is remarkable that Guéranger obtained this apostolic approbation so quickly, but the fact that Gregory XVI was himself a monk may have pre-disposed his sympathies.

Despite the fact that the Pope had approved the new foundation, it was necessary for Solesmes to become part of the Benedictine Order. After a short retreat, Guéranger made his profession as a Benedictine monk in the sacristy of St. Paul without the Walls. At the end of the summer of 1837, Guéranger left Rome with Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire (1802-1861)¹⁵. to start their long journey back to France. Guéranger arrived at Solesmes on the eve of All Saints the same year. The Papal brief of foundation was read in choir and the Office was celebrated. On the 21st November, the new Abbot of Solesmes received the vows of the four fathers. The foundation of the Abbey having been effected, there were yet many trials to endure.

1.3.3. The difficulties of the new foundation

During the first month, the first difficulty was that of pontifical rights and privileges; Mgr Jean-Baptiste Bouvier (1783-1854), the new Bishop of Le Mans was not favourably disposed to the new foundation, for the community was to function outside his authority, being of pontifical right. He resented the idea that two prelates should have Ordinary jurisdiction on the same territory. Before the approval of Rome, Mgr Bouvier had encouraged the community, but then it was still under his authority. He had no comprehension of religious

¹³ The Congregations of St. Maur and Cluny were the ancient Benedictine foundations in France which were dissolved at the Revolution of 1789.

¹⁴ Soltner, op cit., p 44. "*Nous ne ferons rien sans notre indépendance monastique*".

¹⁵ Jean-Baptiste Lacordaire (1802-1861) was a priest renowned for his preaching of the Lenten Conferences at Notre Dame de Paris. He re-founded the Dominican Order in France and was a friend of Guéranger.

exemption, and felt that Guéranger posed a threat in the light of his polemical writings. He could not accept that Solesmes owed him no further obedience, and that they were autonomous and directly under the authority of the Holy See. Dom Guéranger saw very clearly that this independence was essential for religious orders, and that he had to be firm in his dealings with the bishop. The question was asked as to whether there would be, from now on, two Bishops in the Diocese of Le Mans. After a long feud between the two prelates, Guéranger decided to submit the whole affair for the judgement of Rome. The difficulties continued, especially at times of ordinations. In 1843, Guéranger once again went to Rome, and obtained a Brief which maintained his rights as a regular prelate.

Mgr Bouvier decided to report a division in the clergy to the State, concerning the liturgical rites and the question of vows. At that time, the French State was in a position to intimidate the Holy See, who was persuaded not to deliver the Brief which Guéranger had demanded. After seven years of fighting, the Abbey fell under the jurisdiction of the diocese and this was the final blow. The monastery had to close; Guéranger and his monks responded by docile obedience, saying, "Let us therefore be sons of obedience and always faithful more than ever: it is there, I repeat it, the glorious mark of true Regulars"¹⁶.

Guéranger had met Mgr Fornari in Rome; he was the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris. This Italian prelate was ready to help Guéranger, and he was sympathetic to the role played by the religious in bringing the clergy, impregnated by Gallican ideas, to a saner conception of the unity of the Church and her universality. It was thanks to this prelate that the measures taken against Guéranger were withdrawn in 1852. Finally the Abbey of Solesmes was safe, and with many generous gifts from friends, it could flourish.

Since 1852, Guéranger's Abbatiato was definitive and perpetual. The problems with Mgr Bouvier lessened, and he became more conciliant as he grew older. The old bishop died in Rome in 1854 and his successor, Mgr Nanquette publicly expressed his esteem for the Abbey. Solesmes was now fully recognised and approved, not only by the universal Church but also by the diocesan Church.

1.3.4. The Development of the Congregation of Solesmes

In 1853, Guéranger founded a monastery at Liguge (Abbey in 1864), and in 1864, another in Marseilles. St. Cecilia's Abbey for nuns was founded in the same year and was made an Abbey in 1870. Since Guéranger's time, there have been many new foundations, of which, the Abbey of Fontgombault has founded four new monasteries. It is in most of these monasteries of the French Congregation where a great number of faithful souls are attracted by the noble liturgy with Gregorian chant.

It is remarkable that most of the monasteries of this congregation have reacted with great care, prudence and moderation, faced with the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the consequent liturgical reforms.

¹⁶ Soltner, op cit., p 51. "*Soyons donc fils d'obéissance et toujours fideles et plus que jamais: c'est là, je le répète, la glorieuse marque des vrais Réguliers*".

2. DOM GUÉRANGER AND THE "INSTITUTIONS LITURGIQUES"

The liturgical work of Dom Guéranger can be divided into two main categories: scientific and theological writing, and writing of a more pastoral nature¹⁷. The *Institutions liturgiques* are a work of great erudition, and is praiseworthy for its insight and lucid approach to the liturgical problems of his time. In a study of this opus, it is necessary to expose in greater detail the problems against which Dom Guéranger wrote and fought. His thought behind the work will be dealt with, as will be the consequent controversy.

2.1. The liturgical situation in the time of Guéranger

The main problem which concerned Guéranger was a tendency among Catholics to individualise the liturgy, and not to understand it in an ecclesial way. One of the main signs of this degradation of the liturgical spirit was the proliferation of new particular rites and the loss of a communal aspect of life in the Church. This was due to various developments in theology and spirituality, notably Jansenism and Gallicanism¹⁸, which laid a greater stress on individual spirituality and prayer. In other words, Guéranger fought against personal individualism and that of whole particular Churches.

2.1.1. Liturgical diversity - particular liturgies

Guéranger bears witness in the *Institutions liturgiques* to the existence of a diversity of traditional rites and to that of many new rites known as *neo-Gallican*. He describes them in great detail and narrates their development from the early 17th century to his own time. These so-called neo-Gallican liturgies were *particular* for each diocese in France and they all closely resembled the Roman rite. However, they were very different from each other¹⁹.

What characterised the particular liturgies was their novelty: the first of these compositions were the Ritual of Alet (1667), the Breviary of Vienna (1678) and the Missal of Paris published by François de Harlay in 1680²⁰. The reform which made the greatest impact was the liturgy of Charles-Gaspard de Vintimille, Archbishop of Paris (since 1729). The Missal

¹⁷ Johnson C., *Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875): a liturgical theologian*, Rome 1984, p 339.

¹⁸ Jansenism is a heresy concerning the doctrine of Grace, (cf. Dz. 1092-1096) It is a doctrine similar to Calvinism, preaching an erroneous view of predestination and the ability of the human will to do good. Gallicanism is an error concerning the constitution of the Church. It holds the partial autonomy of the national Church with regard to the Holy See.

¹⁹ To go into detail concerning the neo-Gallican rites would require a specialised study, which is out of the scope of this present work.

²⁰ Cabrol F., *Liturgies neo-gallicanes*, in: *Liturgia*, Paris 1930, p 866.

and Breviary of this reform appeared in 1736²¹. The Roman authorities were silent for many years until the promulgation of *Autorem fidei* in 1794²².

One of the projects of the Constitutional Church of 1789 was to produce a national liturgy, but nothing of this was realised, and all changes in the liturgy were unofficial. Guéranger's attitude to this confusion of rites was one of anxiety, and the only solution for him seemed to be a return to the official Roman rite.

2.1.2. The nature of the new liturgies

It is impossible in such a study as this to describe in detail all the neo-Gallican liturgies. However, the general principles these liturgies had in common will be outlined. They were generally based on the Roman liturgy of St. Pius V, but the texts were changed in accordance with the current deviations in theology. Three main principles were adopted: i. to remove all non-scriptural texts, ii. the redistribution of the priority of feasts, iii. to revise the lectionary and to redistribute the hymns and psalms of the Breviary. The primacy of Sundays over other feasts was asserted and the degrees of solemnity were simplified. Guéranger's fundamental objection to these liturgies is that they were published without proper authorisation of the Holy See, and that they were not faithful to tradition. The greatest cause of the liturgical problem in France was not in fact the diversity of rites, but the Revolution of 1789 which redistributed the dioceses, thus causing great confusion in the question of rites²³.

2.1.3. The influence of Jansenism and Gallicanism

Guéranger asserts in his work that Jansenism and Gallicanism were strongly felt as the main inspirations of the new liturgies. He attributes this influence to the de-symbolisation of the liturgy. He makes an example of this when describing the Mass of Jacques Jubé, parish priest of Asnières near Paris²⁴. The Mass is characterised by extreme simplicity and sobriety. Most of the complex ceremonies of the Roman rite disappear and much of the Mass was read in French. Guéranger maintains that all this is a sign of Jansenism. He made a complete study of all the current liturgies, and found small changes in the text which were capable of a Jansenist interpretation. They were altered for a reason, and this was likely to be a theological one, though it can be argued that there were similar variations in ancient and traditional service books²⁵.

As for Gallicanism, the implications are much clearer. Many liturgical books suppressed all references to the rights and primacy of the Roman Pontiff. The texts of the Proper of St. Peter

²¹ Guéranger P., *Institutions liturgiques* (extraits), Vouille 1977, pp 164-166. Vintimille accepted the Bull Unigenitus of Clement XI (8th September 1713) which condemned 101 doctrinal affirmations taken from the *Réflexions morales* of P. Quesnel.

²² Cabrol, op cit., p 870. - concerning the silence of Rome about the neo-Gallican liturgies, although Jansenism as a doctrine had been condemned.

²³ Johnson, op cit., pp 180-189.

²⁴ Guéranger, op cit., pp 155-156.

²⁵ Johnson, op cit., p 185.

were frequently altered to exclude a Papalist interpretation²⁶, notably in the Missal of Troyes (1736)²⁷.

2.2. The liturgical thought of Pom Guéranger

It is in the context of this liturgical confusion that Guéranger reflected and researched, and the more he studied about good liturgical principles and the current service books, the more he saw a need to formulate a new liturgical theology and to make an analysis of the existing problems. The *Institutions liturgiques* are at the same time an immense work of liturgical history and a new expose of his theological thought. What was of great importance to Guéranger was to make this study of the liturgy in the light of history, to analyse the situation of his time, and to propose a solution for the future.

2.2.1. The definition of the liturgy

In a scientific work, Guéranger considered it fitting to begin with a definition of his subject matter. Therefore, the first chapter of the *Institutions liturgiques* begins with the definition of the liturgy: "The liturgy, as generally understood, is the totality of symbols, chants and actions by means of which the Church expresses and manifests her religion towards God²⁸. Guéranger had examined a number of ancient definitions in a spirit of fidelity to the tradition, but found the need to formulate a more precise and detailed definition. There are two main elements in this definition: the *Church* and *religion*²⁹.

In placing the Church as the subject of his definition, Guéranger underlined the *ecclesial* dimension of the liturgy, that all development of the liturgy is governed by the whole Church. The liturgy is not a private and individual act of prayer, but the action of the whole people of God. The second point of this definition is that of *religion*. We note that Guéranger does not speak of any religion, but of the religion of *the Church* ("sa religion"). By this word, Guéranger meant the worship offered to the Father by Christ as the Head of the Church. The principal acts of religion, according to Guéranger, are *confession*, *prayer* and *praise*³⁰. The term *confession* concerns the expression of the mysteries of the Faith in the liturgy: the Church prays as she believes. Prayer is the manifestation of the love which the Church expresses to her God, and she sings her praise to God on account of His goodness.

The Church expresses her religion by means of "*the totality of symbols, chants and acts*". Guéranger understood the term symbol in the sense of sensible signs through which grace is conferred, increased and maintained in the heart of the faithful³¹. Concerning chants, he did not limit himself to musical compositions, but the whole liturgy was to be sung. That is to say that the liturgical texts were considered to belong to the literary category of poetry. Therefore,

²⁶ Ibid., p 182.

²⁷ Guéranger, op cit., p 157.

²⁸ Johnson, op cit., p 247 note 2. "*La liturgie, considérée en général, est l'ensemble des symboles, des chants et des actes au moyen desquels l'Eglise exprime et manifeste sa religion envers Dieu*". IL 1, 1.

²⁹ Ibid., pp 248-249.

³⁰ Ibid., pp 250.

³¹ Ibid., pp 252.

the aesthetic character of the liturgy was uppermost in Guéranger's mind. The liturgy is not merely a piece of theatre; it is an *action*. In some countries, the faithful speak of "doing the Mass", not saying or reading it. This action is an incarnation of the mysteries being celebrated, not merely a bringing to mind. The mysteries are *actualised*, made actual³².

The whole of Guéranger's thought revolves around this definition.

2.2.2. The vertical aspect of the liturgy

By this "vertical aspect" is meant the relation between man and God, finding its expression in the liturgy. The term which expresses this aspect is *religion*: confession, prayer and praise. By means of this religion, the Triune and Unique God is worshipped. This relation between man and God is reciprocal: the Word of God became incarnate for man, who prays and praises God for the work of his Redemption. The liturgy is the actualisation of the mystery of the Incarnation, which idea is at the centre of Guéranger's thought³³. For Guéranger, the life of Christ was one liturgical act, which he brought to completion by the institution of the Eucharist³⁴. It should be added here that the institution of the Eucharist is in direct relation with the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, as well as with the whole life of the Incarnate Word of God. The liturgy of the Church was to become the organum (instrument) of the proclamation of the Christian kerygma: the Gospel of Salvation.

The "totality of symbols, chants and acts" in Guéranger's definition are to be understood in the context of the theology of the Incarnation, without which the liturgy would have no sense. One of Guéranger's most characteristic thoughts concerning the liturgy was about the action of the holy Ghost, whose role in the liturgy was that of the Spirit who inspired the sacred Scriptures³⁵. In other words, because the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church and gives to her the fulness of truth, the liturgy can be said to be inspired and canonised. In summary, the liturgy is the prayer of Christ in the Church to the Father; it is the actualisation of the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, and it is the result of divine inspiration.

2.2.3. The horizontal aspect of the liturgy

What for Guéranger was the distinction between individual prayer and liturgy? This is an important point in the work of Guéranger, in his efforts for the restoration of the liturgy. Guéranger preferred to speak of *individual* prayer rather than private prayer. The distinguishing mark of the liturgy is that it is a *social* action. This social dimension was for Guéranger "the basis of all divine worship"³⁶. It was regretted that the divine office was not always celebrated in common, but even when it was recited individually, it was still liturgy, for it is recited *in ecclesia*.

³² Ibid., p 252.

³³ Ibid., p 254.

³⁴ Ibid., p 254.

³⁵ Ibid., p 255 note 31. "*C'est dans la liturgie que l'Esprit qui inspira les Ecritures sacrées parle encore; la liturgie et la Tradition même a son plus haut degré de puissance et de solennité*". IL 1, 3.

³⁶ Ibid., p 256 note 34. "... *la base du culte divin tout entier*". IL 4. 149 note 3.

The Church is a society of men, not angels; and it is of the nature of the Church that she should express herself by means of human signs and symbols. The liturgy is the expression par excellence of the life of the church. We learn from Aristotle and St. Thomas that man is a social animal³⁷. Now, the Church is a visible society, and each man is bound to worship God by the virtue of religion. It therefore follows that men in this society known as the Church must worship communally; this they do by means of the liturgy. So, in addition to being the worship of Christ in the Church, the liturgy is a corporate act of prayer. This corporate nature of the liturgy is the horizontal dimension. Guéranger does not mean to say that individual prayer is not legitimate, but he clearly states that this private individual prayer must not be to the detriment of the corporate prayer of the Church, which is the liturgy. Those who lived fully the life of the Church should not experience any conflict in this matter³⁸.

A strong objection which Guéranger had against the neo-Gallican liturgies was that they were strongly scholarly and synthetic, and therefore destroyed the social and universal nature of the liturgy. The lectures of many breviaries had been so much exaggerated that they became more like books of spiritual reading than true liturgical books.

For Guéranger, it was important that the faithful should be able to participate in the liturgy by entering into its mysteries. This required a sound catechesis, and (his was the role that Guéranger attributed to his *Année liturgique*³⁹). By this means, the faithful could be encouraged to put aside their private devotions and return to a real participation in the prayer of the Church.

2.2.4. The artistic and human dimension of the liturgy

In studying Guéranger's theology of the liturgy concerning the social and horizontal aspect, it would be a grave injustice to neglect the artistic and aesthetic dimension, which is an integral part of the human person. The artistic dimension must be considered an integral part of the liturgy, because the Incarnate Christ assumed the totality of our humanity. Guéranger saw in art an essential unity, and for him, to lack sensitivity for beauty and poetry would lead to an incomprehension of the liturgy⁴⁰. He did not reduce liturgy to being merely a form of art, nor was he a mere Romantic: he understood that knowledge comes to man only through the senses. If art serves to preach the Gospel and bring a man to salvation, it is sufficient that liturgy should not be devoid of human culture. Beauty is a reflection of truth, so therefore, the liturgy whose essence is the truth of the Gospel must reflect the beauty of Him who is the object of this truth. Guéranger realised that in order to formulate a sound liturgical theology, it was necessary to study philosophical anthropology, which should be based upon sound principles. It is most likely that in the early 19th century, Guéranger would have been formed according to the philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas.

He was highly suspicious of spiritual writings which depreciated beauty and the good things of this world, and he sharply reacted against any kind of Manichean or rationalistic principles. He honoured all kinds of sacred art: architecture, painting, sculpture, music, poetry,

³⁷ 21) St. Thomas aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I , XCVI, 4, c. II-II , CIX, 3, 1. II-II , CXIV, 4, c.

³⁸ Johnson, op cit., pp 257-258.

³⁹ The *Année liturgique* is exposed in Chapter 3 of this study.

⁴⁰ Johnson, op cit., p 261.

calligraphy. It was necessary to find a just medium between the spiritual and the material. For Guéranger, the liturgical action involves the whole man.

2.2.5. Development and unity of the liturgy

Dom Guéranger has been frequently attacked for being an immobilist in liturgical matters, considering the Roman liturgy as absolutely perfect, and being opposed to any change and development. Another accusation was that Guéranger wished the whole Church to use the Roman rite. Both these accusations are clearly false and against the truth. He maintained that liturgy changes in the course of its development, and that local rites are not always illegitimate.

Concerning the development of the liturgy, Guéranger maintained that progress and development were historical facts⁴¹. He was in favour of a revision of the Roman Breviary. Although the substance of Revelation was immutable, its expression was not, as is seen in the development of dogma as expressed in the definitions of the Ecumenical Councils. The development of the liturgy is parallel with the development of dogma⁴².

There may be occasions when the Church has to adapt the liturgy to new situations and new mentalities, as no particular age has the monopoly upon its expression. Guéranger maintains that a Pope or a Council has the right to change the liturgy, and that one Pope cannot bind a successor, but no individual has the right to make arbitrary changes.

There are rules which govern the legitimate development of the liturgy. The changes must be really effected by the competent authorities, in orthodox conditions, with an orthodox intention. The faithful must be prepared by their pastors for such changes, otherwise these last will cause much suffering and harm to the faith of the people⁴³. In such changes, there can be a risk of secularizing the liturgy through the temptation of making the liturgy more intelligible and centred on man. He warned against the dangers of false ecumenism⁴⁴.

Concerning the unity of the liturgy, it has been already stated that though Guéranger was an ultramontanist, he did not wish to systematically destroy all non-Roman rites. His principle was not that of *uniformity*, but was founded upon conformity to the nature of dogma and the constitution of the Church. It was necessary that the Church, which has authority to teach the faith, should also govern its expression in the liturgy. Only the central authority of the whole Church must sanction changes in the liturgy. The reason is that the Church must be one in the

⁴¹ Ibid., p 332. "*Je ne nie pas le progrès de la liturgie; j'ai même écrit l'histoire de ce progrès, en écrivant l'histoire générale de la liturgie*". IL 3, 497. cf. SC 23 which speaks of the *sana traditio* and of *legitima progressio*.

⁴² Cf. J. H. Newman, An essay on the development of Christian doctrine.

⁴³ Johnson, op cit., p 335 note 260. "*Et a quelle épreuve ne met-on pas la foi des simples, quand il leur faut répondre a cette objection qui se présente d'elle-même a leurs esprits, lors même que leurs oreilles ne l'entendraient pas retenir de toutes parts: La religion est changée: on ne prie plus, on ne chante plus, on ne célèbre plus comme autrefois. Vous pensez que tout est bien, parce que, après tout, il est encore vrai de dire que le symbole est demeuré intact; mais c'est oublier que les distinctions les plus vulgaires sont un effort beaucoup au-dessus de l'intelligence du peuple; que ces peuple juge par les sens, et qu'il croira a l'immobilité du fond quand ses yeux et ses oreilles seront bien convaincus de l'immobilité de la forme. On ne modifie pas l'espèce humaine comme on refait un Bréviaire*". IL 3, 478-479.

⁴⁴ Ibid. , p 336 note 263.

bond of communion. Therefore was Guéranger opposed to all forms of individualism, personal and regional. This individualism was against the unity of the Church⁴⁵.

Did Guéranger consider the unity of the Church to the detriment of the local diocesan Church in liturgical matters? This is not so, for he defended legitimate local usages. He was aware that the Church's law provided for such ritual variation, and this did not contradict the unity of the Church. Why, then, was Guéranger opposed to the neo-Gallican liturgies? He would not have disapproved of them had they been approved by the Holy See. Had Rome judged these these liturgies as authentic witnesses of the tradition, then Guéranger would have accepted them. He indeed hoped that some of these liturgies would be approved by ecclesiastical authority, and he personally favoured a return in some parts of France of the ancient Gallican liturgy. He was aware that such liturgies as the Ambrosian and Mozarabic rites were fully approved in the Church.

Guéranger himself was alarmed by the speed with which the French Episcopate was adopting the Roman rite⁴⁶. His basic line was that if it was approved by Rome, it was Catholic and in accord with tradition. It was always assumed that the Roman Church reflected orthodoxy, and this for ultramontanism was the general rule.

2.2.6. Tradition and traditionalism

It is of utmost importance that the historic meanings of these words be correctly understood. Traditionalism was not for Guéranger a systematic refusal of new forms, nor a polemical opinion against liberalism. It is true to say that some modern French traditionalists are inspired by the traditionalism of the early to mid 19th century. It is therefore necessary to define *Tradition* and *traditionalism* carefully.

Tradition in the theological sense is opinion, belief or custom handed down, handing down of these, from ancestors to posterity, especially orally or by practice. Traditionalism is an excessive respect for tradition, or it is a philosophical system referring all religious knowledge to divine revelation and tradition⁴⁷.

The principal exponents of the Traditionalist school were Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), Joseph de Maistre (1753-1851) and the Abbe de Lamennais, of whom Guéranger had read and whom he admired. They in turn had been inspired by Francois-Rene Chateaubriand (1768-1848). Although Guéranger had been inspired by the traditionalists, he had studied the Fathers, and as a result, he was convinced that the Christian doctrine can be grasped through knowledge of the Tradition, which was Guéranger's theological key. Because of the current historical circumstances, it would have been natural for Guéranger to regard human reason with suspicion. It was Lamennais who led Guéranger to a study of the liturgy. But, Guéranger soon saw the weakness of the traditionalist position when he wrote that they lacked a sense of theology, since he had been himself a traditionalist⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p 296.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp 331-332.

⁴⁷ The Concise Oxford Dictionary, Oxford 1983, p 1135.

⁴⁸ Johnson, op cit., p 301 note 96. "*Nos traditionalistes. .. manquent de théologie. J'en sais quelque chose puisque j'ai été de leur camp.*" Guéranger to Mgr Pie, 27th November 1865.

It would be useful here to outline the traditionalism of the Abbé de Lamennais, to examine why Guéranger had been influenced in that direction. For Lamennais, orthodox religion is the only foundation of society. (He was chiefly concerned with secular politics.) The truth of the Faith could only be known through revelation and tradition. Religion and the language by which it is transmitted are revealed by God. In relation with this is Lamennais' theory of the *sens commun* (general reason), concerning the common consensus on truth. This theory is conceived to be complementary with the role of authority. The essential marks of tradition are unity, universality and antiquity. If these marks are also those of the Catholic Church, the Church is the embodiment of Tradition⁴⁹. Lamennais was condemned on account of his refusal to accept that God is knowable through natural reason⁵⁰. Guéranger was impressed by this theory concerning tradition, but he was orthodox in regard of the knowability of God through natural reason.

Lamennais was condemned for his exaggeration of tradition to the detriment of natural reason. The most orthodox solution was a *via media* where both tradition and natural reason were respected. How was Guéranger to understand Tradition? He expressed this difficulty in the Preface of the first volume of the *Institutions liturgiques*⁵¹. He understood the Tradition as something living, not static. The first two volumes of the *Institutions liturgiques* were dedicated to the history of the liturgy in order to discover a valid definition of Tradition. Furthermore, he attempts a definition in his second letter to the Bishop of Orleans (1846). The letter was essentially polemical in nature, but he speaks of the question of tradition in some detail to hammer home his point.

A sacred doctrine not found explicitly in Scripture, but which is believed to have its origin in the Revelation is termed a Tradition. It is transmitted by means of authoritative formulations which are consulted by the church when she needs to examine her faith and practice⁵². Tradition rests upon divine authority in the same way as the Scriptures, and it is indeed the Tradition which authentically interprets the Sacred Scriptures. Tradition can be divided into three aspects: i. divine, ii. apostolic, and iii. ecclesiastical.

Tradition is not static; it lives through the Church who teaches, applies and develops it. Tradition is preserved by the definitions of the Popes and Councils, by its practice in the Church and by conserving the monuments of Tradition such as the writings of the Fathers. The tradition is bound indivisibly with the Church, and the two cannot be separated.

The liturgy is the main instrument of tradition and its *locus theologicus*⁵³. For Guéranger, there were five principal sources of tradition: i. the authority of the Universal Church, ii. the authority of the Roman Church, iii. the authority of the local Churches, iv. the authority of the

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp 303-304.

⁵⁰ Cf. First Vatican Council (1870), Dz 3015-3020.

⁵¹ 35) Johnson, op cit., p 311 note 140. "*Comment montrer la Tradition, cette nécessité première de toutes les institutions catholiques, dans les formules et des usages tout nouveaux*". IL 1, 69.

⁵² Ibid., p 313 note 150. "*La Tradition, dans le langage de la théologie catholique, est une doctrine sacrée qui ne se trouve pas contenue, au moins expressivement, dans l'Écriture sainte, mais qui fut donnée de vive voix par son divin auteur, et qui s'est transmise d'âge en âge, à l'aide de documents qui forment autorité dans l'Église, et auxquels l'Église emprunte la matière de ses décisions souveraines*". IL 4, 337.

⁵³ Ibid., p 316.

Fathers and v. the authority of approved theologians. However, the liturgy is not a sixth authority, but the instrument by which the Tradition is transmitted.

It is seen that Guéranger's thought concerning Tradition is strongly ultramontane, but more moderately so than many of his contemporaries in the second half of the 19th century. Guéranger's theology is remarkably logical and consistent, and he shows an exemplary attitude of respect and obedience to the authority of the Church. He deplored the use of Scripture to the detriment of the Tradition, as they were subject to the interpretation of the Tradition. It was therefore wrong to reject non-Scriptural texts from the liturgy as a matter of principle. The liturgy was never changed to suit the teaching of the Church, but she looked to the liturgy as a locus theologicus.

2.2.7. The anti-liturgical heresy

The principles which have just been outlined show the relation between the dogma of the faith and the liturgy. Following this principle, to attack the liturgy is to attack the faith. Now, to attack the faith or to contradict it is heresy. If the liturgy were to be destroyed, how could the Faith be transmitted? If the Faith were merely a matter of facts to be learnt intellectually, there is no need for liturgy, but if the faith is the living Gospel, it must be transmitted by a living liturgy which actualises the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.

The *anti-liturgical* heresy was the system of unorthodox principles used to undermine the Church's liturgical faith and practice. It was fundamentally an attack on the traditional forms of the celebration of the liturgy. Guéranger was severely attacked for the use of this term, but following his thought, the term is justified. In the *Institutions liturgiques* and in replying to his critics, Guéranger lists twelve characteristics of the anti-liturgical heresy:

- i) The rejection of tradition: This happens when the liturgy is changed to suit heterodox doctrine.
- ii) To replace texts composed by the Church by texts from the Scriptures: This is to use the Word of God to silence the Tradition.
- iii) The composition of new texts: When a Scriptural text could not be of use in introducing new doctrines, new texts were composed.
- iv) The illogical character of these changes: The desire to return to a primitive simplicity in the liturgy was impossible when respect for the Tradition had been lost.
- v) The desire to find a rational explanation for every liturgical action. An excessive desire to simplify the liturgy, leading to a loss of the sense of mystery.
- vi) The "extinction of the quality of unction": This is inevitable with the making of "synthetic" liturgies.
- vii) The diminution of the honour given to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. This characteristic was present in many of the neo-Gallican missals.

viii) The use of the vernacular language: Guéranger did not oppose the use per se of the vernacular language, but the desire to debase the element of beauty in the liturgy.

ix) The desire to shorten the prayer of the Church: In the desire for simplicity and practical functionalism, the tendency was to shorten the lengthy and onerous parts of the liturgy.

x) The rejection of the authority of Rome: which manifests itself by the elimination or alteration of the Petrine Office.

xi) A diminution of the dignity and role of the priesthood: without the priesthood, there can be no liturgy.

xii) The increase of secular control in ecclesiastical matters.

These characteristics were for Guéranger the marks of a kind of neo-protestantism, as he considered Jansenism to be a French protestantism⁵⁴.

2.3. The practice of the liturgy according to Guéranger

As has been mentioned earlier, Solesmes was founded, not only for the restoration of the monastic life, but in accordance with the spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict, for the restoration of the liturgy. It was, therefore, in his monastery that Guéranger applied his liturgical principles. The liturgy was a day to day reality, and it was necessary for Guéranger to study the practical applications of his theology.

2.3.1. The study of the liturgy

In the study of the liturgy, Guéranger saw that it was necessary to go to the source material: the liturgical books, both currently used books and those no longer in use, but he felt that the student needed a good commentary, and this was the main object of the *Institutions liturgiques* and *l'Année liturgique*. A student should be familiar with all the Roman books: Breviary, Missal, Ritual, Pontifical, Martyrology, Episcopal Ceremonial, Gradual, Antiphoner and Processional. One who studied the sources and the Sacred Scriptures would become a true liturgist and not a "technician"⁵⁵. A return to the study of liturgy would lead to a true renewal of the liturgy. In writing his own liturgical work, he referred to the sources: the liturgies of the western and eastern Churches. He added to this a study of the Fathers, the history of the Church and of the development of the Tradition, and the writings of liturgical scholars. He studied the liturgy from a historical and theological point of view, and he despised superficial commentaries on the liturgy.

2.3.2. The liturgy and catechesis

Guéranger maintains that the best catechesis is to be found in the liturgy, that the faithful will find the mysteries of the faith actualised and brought to life, which is a source of spiritual

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp 286-288

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp 266-268, p 269 note 106. ". . . il avancera et deviendra avec le temps un véritable liturgiste, non à la manière de ces hommes mécaniques qui savent rédiger un Ordo, et ignorent tout ce qui est au delà". IL 3, 7-8.

nourishment. By the means of signs, symbols and words, the mysteries are made incarnate. The people of God, recognising God's work in the liturgy will respond with love. This is not the purpose of the liturgy, but this is a property of the sacred action. That is to say that the liturgy is not a commentary of the history of salvation, but it is an actualisation of the mysteries contained therein. As Guéranger set out in his theological theory, the liturgy is the instrument of the Faith, so therefore, it teaches the Church. This teaching is catechesis. Catechesis founded upon the liturgy is comprehensive and complete. The definitions of the Council of Trent teach no more than does the liturgy.

The liturgy teaches the faithful the true nature of devotion, and a Christian soul with a real liturgical spirit will not fall into the exaggerations of a more pietistic spirituality. In the Marian feasts will be found a truly ecclesial manner of devotion to the Mother of God. Even if the legends of the Breviary lacked historical truth, Guéranger saw in them an epic form of literature, containing nothing contrary to faith or morals, which could only be edifying for the faithful. The reading of these legends would be akin to reading texts in the Scriptures in the apocalyptic *genre littéraire*. Theological integrity was always seen as being of greater importance to historical authenticity⁵⁶.

2.3.3. The language of the liturgy

It could be argued that Guéranger's emphasis on the catechetical value of the liturgy would justify the use of the vernacular language in the liturgy. The eastern Churches allow the use of the vernacular, and the Second Vatican Council made this possible in the Latin Church for pastoral reasons, but this was clearly impossible in Guéranger's time.

Guéranger had reasons for opposing the use of the vernacular, as he had found many neo-Gallican books written in French. He was obliged to respect the decision of the Council of Trent in insisting on the Latin language for the Roman rite, and respect for the decisions of the official Church was an important point in Guéranger's thought. He also pointed out that the use of the vernacular concerns only one level of intelligibility, that of understanding the words of the texts. Also, the use of modern languages tends to subject the liturgy to capricious change. A classical or "dead" language does not change, thus assuring the integrity of the literal sense of the liturgical texts.

In the matter of intelligibility, to facilitate the *participatio actuosa*, the faithful should not be underestimated. It is not possible for us to judge how efficacious the words of the liturgy are to the faithful, whether they are in Latin or in the vernacular. Guéranger disapproved of the use of bilingual missals, as it was more important for the people to enter into the spirit of the liturgy than to understand the texts on a literal level. The faithful did better to *listen* to the Word of God than to read it, and it was better to look at the sacred action being celebrated at the altar than to bury their heads in their books. This would construct a real sense of the social and communal aspect of the liturgy, as all would visibly participate in the action. Guéranger helped the faithful by writing the *Année liturgique*, so that they could meditate the sacred mysteries and then to assist at the liturgy with a full understanding of what they were to participate in.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp 274-277.

Guéranger's insistence on the use of the Latin language was not motivated by the intention to hide the liturgy from the people, but on the contrary, he desired the fullest and most profound participation possible⁵⁷.

Appendix: the controversy surrounding the *Institutions liturgiques*

The fundamental question related to the *Institutions liturgiques* is whether it was scholarly or polemical work. Whichever way this question is answered, the fact remains that this book was the direct cause of the controversy over the diversity of rites and the authority of the French Episcopate, in relation with the authority of the Holy See in liturgical matters.

Guéranger was fiercely attacked by a number of bishops, notably by Mgr d'Astros, Archbishop of Toulouse, who defended the local rites. This attack was made in the form of a pamphlet published in 1843, in which he accused Guéranger of opposing the authority of the bishops, to which Guéranger replied with great moderation⁵⁸. The first public episcopal censure of the *Institutions liturgiques* came in 1843 from Mgr Affre, Archbishop of Paris. This *ad clerum*⁵⁹ won much support from many members of the French Episcopate, despite its aggressive tone. Guéranger's work was one of the reasons for his problems with Mgr Bouvier of le Mans.

The Abbot of Solesmes was supported by few of the French Episcopate, but the bishops adopted the Roman liturgy with remarkable speed. This was largely due to the progress of the ultramontanist movement. The Holy See reacted to the controversy with great prudence, and Pius IX was glad to see any movement which would serve the unity of the Church. He was happy to see the French dioceses adopt the Roman liturgy. The Pope was silent about the work of Guéranger during his lifetime, but he paid tribute to his work in a Brief after the Abbot's death.

Guéranger was a zealous ultramontanist, but he did not wish to destroy the principle of liturgical diversity; he knew that his work was polemical. He was responsible for the adoption of the Roman liturgy by the whole French Church, and he must receive the credit or the blame that all the particular liturgies were abandoned. It can be argued that history has borne witness of the result⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp 277-281.

⁵⁸ Guéranger P., *Défense des Institutions liturgiques*, Le Mans-Paris 1844.

⁵⁹ An *ad clerum* is a circular letter a bishop writes to the priests of his diocese periodically.

⁶⁰ Johnson, op cit., pp 190-243.

3. DOM GUERANGER AND "L'ANNEE LITURGIQUE"

Having exposed in chapter two the scientific and theological aspects of Guéranger in the *Institutions liturgiques*, and having shown how he considered the liturgy as an instrument of catechesis, how it was necessary to initiate the faithful into a full comprehension of the mysteries of the Christian life⁶¹, this chapter discusses how all this was given a pastoral orientation. This was the purpose of the *Année liturgique*: to instruct and guide the layfolk towards a genuine liturgical piety.

3.1. General characteristics of l'Année liturgique

Prayer is for man the first good, so the general preface of *l'Année liturgique* begins⁶². From these first words radiates the whole spirit of Guéranger's work. The Christian life begins with prayer, and it is the function of the liturgical theologian to teach the Church to pray. Prayer is possible only through Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost he sent to his disciples; now, this same Spirit resides in the Church, whose voice is the liturgy. *The prayer of the Church is the most agreeable to the ear and to the heart of God, and the most powerful*⁶³. Soltner continues by saying that *l'Année liturgique* has for its purpose that of making the different accents of this voice heard. Guéranger exalted the liturgy of the Church over all other prayer. From the beginning of the work, he reassures the devout reader that his spiritual life will not suffer in associating itself with the whole Church in liturgical prayer. To the contrary, the liturgy nourishes contemplation and unites the soul more closely to the mysteries of God⁶⁴. Such was the spirituality behind Guéranger's work.

3.1.1. The structure and nature of the work

The *Année liturgique* is divided into fifteen volumes, fourteen containing the text, and the fifteenth consists of an index. The subjects of these are the following: I - the general introduction and Advent, II and III - Christmas time, IV - Septuagesima, V - Lent, VI - Passion and Holy Week, VII, VIII and IX - the Easter season, X to XIV - the time after Pentecost and XV - the Index. The structure of the volumes is similar, except that volume I contains the general introduction, which is a beautiful and strongly doctrinal text. The typical schema for each volume is the following for each of the liturgical seasons: the first part is the introduction to the particular season, always divided into eight chapters (historical, mystical, practical, morning and evening prayers in the spirit of the season, on assistance at Mass, practice of Communion, the Breviary Offices for Sunday and Compline). The second part is dedicated to the Proper of the Season, and the third to the Sanctoral. The liturgical texts are given in Latin and French, but in obedience to the former discipline of the Church, the Canon of the Mass is not translated, but a paraphrase is presented for the benefit of those who do not

⁶¹ Johnson C., P. Guéranger (1805-1875): a liturgical theologian, Rome 1984, p 339.

⁶² 2) Soltner L., Solesmes et Dom Guéranger, Solesmes 1974, p 77. "*La prière est pour l'homme le premier des biens*".

⁶³ 3) Ibid., p 78. "*La prière de l'Eglise est la plus agréable à l'oreille et au cœur de Dieu, et partant la plus puissante*". AL General Introduction .

⁶⁴ Ibid., p 79.

understand Latin. Only the first nine volumes came from Guéranger's hand; the remainder was written by Dom Lucien Fromage⁶⁵.

Guéranger's approach to the liturgical year was directly pastoral. This demanded a popular literary style, simple and florid, but of good quality, which would be comprehensible to the unversed in theological science. The *Année liturgique* was conceived for the ordinary church-going folk, even if it was found useful to many people of learning. Many spiritual authors had written pious meditations on the different parts of the ecclesiastical year, but most of these were little based on a liturgical spirit⁶⁶. Guéranger had said to Dom Paul Piolin that if he did any good for souls, it was through this work⁶⁷. His pastoral aim in *l'Année liturgique* was to persuade the faithful to return to the liturgy as the source of their spiritual life. In order that the whole people of God would participate in the mysteries, they needed a good mystagogical catechesis which Guéranger was successful in giving them.

3.1.2. The originality of the work

Guéranger announced in the first volume of the *Institutions liturgiques* that he would write a commentary on the Liturgical Year that would be unlike any hitherto published work. He set out to help the faithful to understand the mysteries of the liturgy during the various seasons of the Church's year⁶⁸. He intended to put as little of his personality in this work as possible, in order to initiate his readers into the mind of the Church. One of the great qualities of his work is that he included texts, not only from the Roman liturgy, but also from many liturgies of the East and the West. He was very conscious of the biblical character of the liturgical year and he quotes much from the Scriptures.

Guéranger had a talent for fascinating the faithful in the mysteries of the Christian feasts⁶⁹. Many manuals of meditations gave people subjects for prayer, but Guéranger taught people the liturgy that they might pray with the Church by understanding the mysteries.

3.1.3. The doctrinal aspect of the work

Much of the doctrinal intention of the Liturgical year is exposed in the general introduction in the first volume. The main doctrinal aspect set forth concerns the role of prayer, which is the life of Christ in the soul. The great teacher of prayer is Christ and the Holy Ghost who dwells in and inspires the Church, whose voice is the liturgy which is the source and model of all prayer. For Guéranger, the books of piety then available to the faithful failed to instil in them a love of the liturgy. For example, book IV of the *Imitatio Christi* speaks of the excellence of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ and the dispositions required for its worthy receiving, but there is nothing of the essence of the Liturgy as the living and historic Mystery

⁶⁵ Dom Lucien Fromage (1845-1916) was a monk of Solesmes who completed *l'Année liturgique* after Guéranger's death.

⁶⁶ Johnson, op. cit., pp 340-341 notes 1-4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p 345 note 20. "*Si j'ai fait du bien aux âmes, c'est par l'Année liturgique*". P. Piolin, Dom Prosper L.-P. Guéranger, in: *Les illustrations et les célébrités du XIXe siècle*, Paris 1884, p 59.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p 342 note 7.

⁶⁹ Brovelli F., *Per uno studio de l'Année liturgique di P. Guéranger*, Rome 1981, p 49.

of God: the Incarnate Word. It is typical of the pietistic spirituality of the middle ages, an individualistic piety which is not enrooted in the grand Tradition of the Church. Later pious literature of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries abounded and the same subjectivistic spirit is present in most of these works, even from those of great Saints of the Church. Individual prayer is exalted and the liturgy is treated as if it were something other than prayer. For Guéranger, there is no conflict between liturgical prayer and contemplative prayer in solitude. A true contemplative bases his whole spirituality on the liturgy, especially the psalms of the *Opus Dei*⁷⁰.

The central point of the liturgical year is the Christ of whom the liturgical year and its mysteries are the manifestation. The annual cycle unfolds to the believer the whole of the History of Salvation, and the soul who lives therein is *in medio Ecclesiae*⁷¹. The Church's year is entirely centred upon the Christ who is the Alpha and Omega (Apoc, 22, 13). Each mystery and feast brings grace and new growth for each successive year which has a sacramental and historic character. To live the liturgical year is to grow in the life of grace. The Sanctoral blends into the Temporal cycle, as the Saints came to God through Christ⁷². Guéranger's teaching of the character of the different liturgical seasons, entirely centred upon the life and mission of Christ, will be the subject of our investigation in the pages to follow.

The Liturgical Year met with immediate success and remained a great influence on the faithful for more than a century. Unlike his more polemical works, the *Année liturgique* was received with fervour by bishops, priests, religious and laity alike. It became standard reading for Benedictine novices, and was read by later divines of the liturgical movement, such as Doms Lambert Beauduin, Odel Casel and Bernard Botte. Many wrote to Guéranger praising him for his work and saying that it was of great help for their spiritual lives⁷³.

3.2. The character of the different liturgical seasons and feasts

The character in common of all the liturgical seasons and feasts is the accent Guéranger placed on the Incarnation. He contemplated the feasts and celebrations in the light of the great mystery of the Incarnation. All begins and ends with Christ⁷⁴.

3.2.1. The cycle of Christmas

Advent

The mystery of Advent is that of the coming of Christ. He comes in three ways and at three times⁷⁵. Advent is a mystical preparation for the first coming of Christ. Secondly, the Church looks to the Parousia when Christ will come in glory to judge the living and the dead, and

⁷⁰ Johnson, op cit., p 348-351.

⁷¹ It is interesting to note that Vatican II assumes this Christological vision of the liturgical year; cf. SC 102-104.

⁷² Johnson, op cit., pp 351-355.

⁷³ Ibid., pp 345-347.

⁷⁴ Soltner, op cit., p 85.

⁷⁵ Johnson, op cit., pp 355-356 note 61.

thirdly, Christ comes to each faithful in the Eucharist. The liturgy of Advent is full of the words of the Prophets of the Old Testament. This annual preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas unites the Church with the people of the Old Covenant.

The liturgy of Advent reminds the faithful of the *final* Day when Christ will come in glory. Acceptance of Christ's first coming will remove the fear of the day of judgement⁷⁶. Guéranger insists that the baptised should unite themselves with the Church, for she divinises man through Jesus Christ who knocks at the door of the hearts of the faithful. Christ comes to the faithful through the liturgy⁷⁷.

Guéranger reminds us of the eschatological nature of the eucharistic liturgy, not only that it is the central act of the Church's life, but it prepares the Christian for the coming of Christ by bringing it about. The Mass is celebrated in the joyful hope of the coming of the Saviour. The great paradox is that the best preparation for the coming of Christ is the reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist⁷⁸.

The Church reminds us of the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the mystery of the Incarnation, which is why the time of Advent is a strongly marial time. Mary is the new Eve whose obedience restored what was lost by the disobedience of the first Eve. She is the model of true humility. This is the basis of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception which is most fittingly celebrated during Advent. Mary is the instrument of the Incarnation, which is the sense of her sanctity⁷⁹.

Christmas

The liturgy of Christmas has two characteristics: that of *joy* and a sense of *wonder* in the presence of the mystery of the motherhood of Mary who gave birth to the Incarnate Word of God. The two great mysteries of Christmas which escape human intelligence are that of a *God-man* and a *Virgin-mother*. All liturgical celebrations are characterised by adoration, joy, thanksgiving and love, but Christmas is characterised by these in a special way. The mystery of the Incarnation is one of enlightenment where we receive the light of which St. John was so fond of speaking. This is why at Christmas, at the Mass *in die*, the Prologue of Saint John is read, as indeed it is read at the end of each Mass in the old Roman rite of Saint Pius V. Christmas, that is to say the Incarnation, is the gateway to all the other mysteries of the Faith⁸⁰.

For Guéranger, Christmas is not the commercial and sentimental feast modernity has made of it, but it is the Christological mystery *par excellence*. The mystery is double: that of the infancy of Christ in the soul of man and the infancy of man's soul in Christ⁸¹. Guéranger's

⁷⁶ Ibid., p 357 note 70. Cf. *Normae universales de anno liturgico*, no. 39 which characterises the time of Advent *ut tempus devotae ac iucundae expectationis*.

⁷⁷ Johnson, op cit., p 358 notes 71-74.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p 359 note 78.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p 360.

⁸⁰ See no. 32 of the *Normae universales: Post annuam mysterii paschalis nihil antiquius habet Ecclesia quam memoriam Nativitatis Domini et primarum ejus manifestationem recolere: quod fit tempore Nativitatis*.

⁸¹ Johnson, op cit., p 363 note 104. "*Qui pourrait dignement raconter le mystère de l'enfance du Christ dans les âmes, et de l'enfance des âmes dans le Christ? Ce double mystère qui s'accomplit en ce saint temps*". AL Noel 1, 41.

theology is strongly Johannine and Pauline, and the whole tone of the mystery is given in the words: *et Verbum caro factum est*. In this mystery of the Incarnation, God unites himself to us especially in the Eucharist, and this mystery is related to the whole divine plan in the History of Salvation.

The Epiphany

The Epiphany should be seen directly in relation to the mystery of the Incarnation. It is the *manifestation* of the divinity of Christ made flesh. This manifestation in the liturgy is triple: in the persons of the Magi, in his divine Sonship at his baptism, and of his power in the miracle of Cana⁸². The star of Bethlehem represents the light of faith which leads to the Church, the new Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. The Magi are the patriarchs of the Gentiles, showing that the way of salvation was opened to the whole human race. Guéranger's teaching is founded on that of the Fathers⁸³.

3.2.2. The cycle of Easter

Lent

For Guéranger, the season of Lent is above all the time of preparation for the Church's greatest feast, Easter. The spirit of Lent is that of conversion, which is the basis of penance, the death of sin in man and his rebirth in Christ⁸⁴. This is the principle of baptismal regeneration, and the time of Lent reminds us of the preparation of the catechumens for the great Paschal Vigil when they will be solemnly baptised. Penance is closely linked with baptism which is a strong theme of Lent, both of which are seen in relation with conversion to Christ in imitation of his example. Lent is a special time for prayer which is nourished by the liturgy and the Word of God in the Scriptures. Fasting and almsgiving must spring from charity which has its source in prayer. The liturgy of Lent makes us aware of our sinful condition by setting before us the History of Salvation⁸⁵. The season of Lent is designed to strengthen the Christian commitment to the vows of our Baptism.

Easter and the Paschal mystery

Easter is the greatest solemnity of the whole Church's year; it is the day that Jesus through the mystery of his death and resurrection conquered death and opened for us the kingdom of heaven. The resurrection of Christ is the fundamental dogma of the Faith of which Guéranger's writings are full of joy and hope. The expression *mystère pascal* is a translation of the patristic term *paschale sacramentum*, and was first used in modern times by Guéranger⁸⁶.

⁸² On the meaning of the Epiphany, cf. A. G. Martimort, *L'Eglise en prière*, vol IV, *La liturgie et le temps*, Paris 1983, pp 93-95; 100-102.

⁸³ Johnson, op cit., p 336.

⁸⁴ Cf. no. 27 of the *Normae universales* concerning penance and baptism.

⁸⁵ Johnson, op cit., p 368 note 131.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p 370 note 142. "*Quiconque a le bonheur d'entrer avec plénitude d'esprit et de cœur dans l'amour et l'intelligence du mystère pascal, est parvenu au centre même de la vie surnaturelle*". AL Temps Pascal 1, 17. This term, first used in modern times by Guéranger is a key term in the work of the liturgical movement and in the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

It is through being one with the Church that the faithful enter into the celebration of the paschal mystery through the celebration of the Eucharist. The succession of the days of the paschal season are considered as one feast. Guéranger's vision of the paschal mystery was comprehensive, not limiting the Redemption to the Passion and death of Jesus, or only to the Resurrection, but to the whole mystery of his death, resurrection and ascension, as is expressed in the Anamnesis of the Mass. In that, he paved the road for the teaching of Vatican II, which, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, exalts the unity of the paschal mystery⁸⁷.

The significance of Sunday as the "sabbath day" of the Church has its root in the celebration of Easter⁸⁸. Sunday represents the first day of creation and the day of the new creation. Easter is the foundation of the whole liturgical year, for the dates of all the other feasts of the Temporal cycle are calculated from the date of Easter⁸⁹.

The concept of Christ the light is very strong in Guéranger's theology, and led him to speak of Paschaltide in the mystical term of the *illuminative way*. For each of the days of the Easter Octave, he gives a short commentary of the days of creation based on the Hispanic liturgy. He explains the mystery of the Lamb as a great theme of the Apocalypse of Saint John, and as a theme of the Old Testament with its many prefigurings of the Sacrifice of the New Testament. The heavenly liturgy as described in the Apocalypse is the worship of the Lamb, slain yet victorious. The fifty days of Easter is truly the symbol of the *last times*, the sign of the irruption of the Kingdom in this world. This theology holds the key to understanding the Paschal mystery. He speaks much of the Passover and its fulfillment in the feast of Easter. Christ was glorified through the paschal mystery, and since he had risen from the dead, he is master of life and death. The Church now proclaims the teaching of the Apostles who witnessed the glorification of the risen Lord. The empty tomb of Christ and the symbols of death such as the Cross and the tomb have become signs of life. In this way, Guéranger opens to the reader a mystical and neo-patristic exegesis and helps him to enter into the mystery⁹⁰. For the forty days between the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, Guéranger gives to us a real mystagogical catechesis following the practice of the Fathers.

Guéranger takes the opportunity of speaking about the foundation of the Church on Peter, which was to be the visible sign of the presence of the risen Christ (Sacrament of Salvation)⁹¹. The structure of the Church which manifests her sacramental character are the Hierarchy, Doctrine and Sacraments. Guéranger comments on these three characteristics in some detail, always reflecting the theology of the Scriptures and the Fathers.

The Ascension

In Guéranger's thought, the mystery of the Ascension is an integral part of the Paschal mystery, the final mystery which Christ accomplished in the flesh for our salvation. The Ascension is an eschatological feast, reminding us that all must be directed towards bringing

⁸⁷ Cf. SC 6.

⁸⁸ Cf. SC 106: a magnificent definition of Sunday.

⁸⁹ Johnson, op cit., pp 369-373; cf. no. 1 of the *Normae universales*.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp 373-380; cf. no. 22 of the *Normae universales*.

⁹¹ Cf. *Lumen Gentium* no. 1.

all things to completion in Christ in the glory of heaven⁹². Christ is not only a King but the High Priest who intercedes for us to the Father⁹³. The mystery of the Ascension inaugurates the reign of faith and love, since Christ is no longer visible to man.

Pentecost

The mystery of Pentecost is the solemn proclamation of the reign of the Holy Ghost. Pentecost is the crowning of the Paschal mystery where the Spirit of God takes possession of redeemed mankind⁹⁴. It is the fulfilment of the promise of Saint John the Baptist that Jesus would baptise with the Holy Ghost. Guéranger was aware of the triple aspect of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist⁹⁵. For Guéranger, the Church is Pentecostal, and in no need of any new Pentecost, as the Holy Ghost never left the Church. He speaks much on the gifts of the Holy Ghost: piety, knowledge, the fear of the Lord, fortitude, counsel, understanding and wisdom.

3.2.3. The Blessed Trinity and the Church

Whilst commenting on the mystery of the Trinity and on the post-Pentecostal time of the liturgical year, Guéranger gives a synthesis of his ecclesiology. It is too long to comment on in this present study, but the main points will be given.

Concerning the mystery of the Trinity, it is through Revelation that we know that God is three Persons in one Divinity. This knowledge is primarily through the salvific action of each of the three Persons. The Father adopted us as his children, the Son became one with us through the Incarnation and thereby redeemed us, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies those whom the Son redeems. The unity of the Trinity is reflected in the unity of the Church which cannot be broken. In describing the Church, Guéranger reflects the traditional terms found in Scripture, especially in Saint Paul, and in the teachings of the Fathers. He outlines the structure of the Church: the Bishop of Rome and the Episcopate. His teaching is ultramontanistic and is in conformity to the classical teaching of the Magisterium. He is much inspired by the Epistles of Saint Ignatius of Antioch concerning the Episcopate. Guéranger speaks of the mission and teaching authority of the Church. She infallibly teaches the faithful all that is needed for salvation through the celebration of the liturgy and the mysteries of Christ in the liturgical year⁹⁶.

3.2.4. The Mother of God in the liturgy

⁹² Johnson, op cit., p 388 note 243. "*Tous les mystères du Verbe incarné que nous avons vu se dérouler jusqu'ici devaient aboutir à son Ascension; toutes les grâces que nous recevons jour par jour doivent se terminer à la nôtre ... nous sommes en marche pour aller rejoindre notre divin Chef*". AL TP 3, 153.

⁹³ Cf. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, which magnificently exposes the priesthood of Christ.

⁹⁴ Cf. Missale Romanum of Paul VI, collect of the Vigil of Pentecost: *Omnipotens sempiterna Deus, qui paschale sacramentum quinquaginta dierum voluisti mysterio continere, praesta, ut, gentium facta dispersione, divisiones linguarum ad unam confessionem tui nominis caelesti munere congregentur. Per Dominium.*

⁹⁵ Johnson, op cit., p 390 note 256. "... le premier des sceaux... l'eau baptismale... un second sceau... le sacrement de confirmation... un troisième sceau... l'aliment céleste..." AL TP 3, 302-303.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp 394-209.

As the mystery of the Incarnation occupies a central place in Guéranger's theology, so it does in his Mariology. Mary was the instrument that God chose in his plan of salvation. As in the theology of Christmas, he unfolds the traditional theology of the Incarnation. In order to understand the role of the Mother of God, it is necessary to understand God. Mary should never be separated from her Son, or this would give a distorted picture of the mystery of the Incarnation. It should be added that she is venerated only on account of her role in this mystery⁹⁷. To do otherwise can lead to superstition and idolatry. Mary's sanctity is on account of her consent to the will of God, her *fiat*, as that of the Father in the first act of creation and that of Jesus at Gethsemane. She was present in the whole of our Lord's public ministry and she was present at the foot of the Cross.

Her motherhood in relation to the Church is in direct consequence to the Paschal mystery. When she alone maintained faith in the Resurrection, she was the Church⁹⁸. On the day of Pentecost, she received the mission to be the Mother of the Church. Throughout the *Année liturgique*, the commentaries of her feasts are marked by a tenderness and love, but Guéranger never shows any sign of sentimentality or exaggeration.

3.5. The Sanctoral cycle

It is impossible to comment here on all Guéranger said of each Saint, so therefore, this study will limit itself to the general character of Guéranger's work without going into detail. In honouring the Saints of the Church, the Church honours God who is the source of all holiness, and the faithful learn much from their example and what particular virtues can be learnt from each one. Each feast is related to its position in the Temporal cycle, and he was not prepared to enter into the historicity of the Breviary legends, the theological content alone being considered⁹⁹. Guéranger's teaching on the Saints was entirely Christocentric and an assertion of the centrality of the Incarnation.

3.3. Living and contemplating the liturgical year

The *Année liturgique* is monumental in the development of liturgical catechesis and spirituality. As already mentioned, Guéranger saw the highest form of prayer in the liturgy, but he did not refuse the value of men-il prayer and non-liturgical devotions such as the Rosary. He did consider that these other forms of prayer should draw their inspiration from the liturgy, that prayer becomes truly ecclesial¹⁰⁰.

Contemplation cannot suffer because of the liturgy, for, in union with the whole Church, she draws her whole inspiration from the sacred action. The liturgical year, as we have just seen, is a manifestation of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who is the object of our contemplation. To live the liturgical year is one of the most powerful means to progress in the

⁹⁷ Cf. SC 103: it is entirely the vision of Vatican II, especially chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*.

⁹⁸ Johnson, op cit., p 411 note 373. "*La foi de la résurrection du Sauveur... est pour ainsi dire, concentrée dans l'âme de Marie*". AL Passion 602. "*Marie forme à elle seule un monde à part dans l'ordre de la grâce; à elle seule, un moment, elle a été l'Eglise de Jésus*". AL TP 3, 448.

⁹⁹ Cf. SC 104.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. SC 13: ordains that pious exercises must harmonise with the liturgy in keeping count of the liturgical year.

intelligence of the truths of the Faith. *The faith of the faithful is enlightened from year to year, a theological sense is formed in him; prayer leads him to knowledge. The mysteries remain mysteries; but their splendour becomes so alive that the spirit and the heart rejoice in them, and we come to have an idea of joys that will bring us an eternal view of these divine beauties which, through the cloud, have already for us such a charm*¹⁰¹.

Dom Guéranger saw the liturgy with the eyes of a contemplative, refuting those who held that he founded an artificial community to revive archaic forms in the liturgy. He lived and contemplated the liturgical year even before enterprising his monastic foundation. The monks of Solesmes were the first to read the *Année liturgique*, even though the work was not written for them¹⁰². Through living the liturgical year, the faithful are initiated into the wonders of Christian poetry and art. The beauty of the Bride of Christ merges into the wonders of the seasons of the Cosmos. The harmony between nature and the liturgical year is perfect, and this has been the inspiration of generations of Christians. When Christ bursts from the bowels of the netherworld, the birds hatch their young and the flowers bloom forth their gold. The Cosmos unites with the Church to sing the praise of the Creator.

*When a soul incorporated in the Church, celebrates and lives, with her Mother the holy Church, the mystery of the mystical year, all that this sacred year contains realises itself in her, and she sees accomplished for her the word of Saint Elisabeth to Mary: "Blessed is she who believed! For they are realised in you, those things which were told her from the Lord!" (Luke 1, 45)*¹⁰³.

The spirit of the liturgical year is well summed up from the following strophe from a monastic hymn for Christmas:

*Sic praesens testatur dies,
Currens per anni circulum,
Quod solus a sede Patris
Mundi salus adveneris*¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰¹ Guéranger P, *L'Année liturgique*, vol I, Paris 1886, p xxij .

¹⁰² Soltner, op cit., p 79.

¹⁰³ Casel O, *Le mystère du culte dans le Christianisme*, Paris 1983, p 126.

¹⁰⁴ Hymn of I Vespers of Christmas *Christe, Redemptor omnium*. Translation of this hymn taken from the English hymnal, Oxford 1979: *Thus testifies the present day Through every year in long array, That thou, salvation's source alone, Proceededst from the Father's Throne.*

4. DOM GUERANGER AND LITURGICAL CHANT

The reform of sacred music during the nineteenth century was one of the most significant aspects of the liturgical movement. The first step for Guéranger in this reform of Gregorian chant was to form his own monks in the practice of singing the Offices of the Church. Then, the Abbey of Solesmes set to work in researching the musicology of Gregorian chant, restoring the most authentic rhythmic patterns, and publishing new books of liturgical chant¹⁰⁵.

4.1. The restoration of Gregorian chant

Gregorian chant in the nineteenth century was in a bad state; it suffices to examine a Gradual or an Antiphoner of this time, and one will see how difficult it is to interpret the melodies in a sensitive and authentic way. A development in church music of the eighteenth century in France was to sing the melodies with a measured rhythm, mostly in triple time with a minim followed by a crochet in each bar.

Such a rhythmic pattern of *inéqualités* in French baroque music was certainly the inspiration¹⁰⁶. It is not surprising that the tendency of the time to interpolate the liturgy with artistic aspects of secular culture is a cause of this reinterpretation of the Gregorian melodies. Indeed, this reinterpretation of Gregorian chant, not only rhythmically but also melodically, began in the middle ages with the use of *organum*, singing the melody over a *cantus firmus* or in parallel fifths. This marked the beginning of polyphonic church music, reaching its culmination in the 16th century in the music of Palestrina and Vittoria. But in France, the Gregorian melodies did not even develop into polyphonic music; it was simply a crude and decadent way of singing Gregorian chant.

Solesmes had been founded for the restoration of the Roman liturgy, and as music forms an integral part of this liturgy, it was necessary to examine the problem of church music, and to set about restoring it. There had been an attempt made to restore Gregorian chant after the Council of Trent. The Medicean edition, two volumes of Gregorian chant, was published by the Medici press at Rome in 1614-1615. Unfortunately, very little was known at the time by scholars about the composition of the chant, and the result reflected more the fashions of the Renaissance than a restoration of the original compositions. This edition contained truncated and mutilated melodies, for the editors considered it barbaric to allow many notes on syllables not containing the tonic accent of the Latin word, nor would they allow long notes over the grammatically short syllables. They eliminated many of the melismatic passages in the Graduals and Alleluias.

Historically, this attempt at reform is significant, for it forms a model for all subsequent reforms until the middle of the 19th century. Even the noteworthy edition of Mgr F. X. Haberl, published in 1871 by F. Pustet of Regensburg, was based on the Medicean edition

¹⁰⁵ Sablayrolles M., *Le Chant gregorien*, in: *Liturgia*, Paris 1930, pp 446-453. Rousseau O, *Histoire du mouvement liturgique*, Paris 1945, pp 151 ff Soltner L., *Solesmes et Dom Guéranger*, Solesmes 1974, pp 87-89. - are useful for the early work of Solesmes on Gregorian chant.

¹⁰⁶ Veilhan J.-C., *Les règles de l'interprétation musicale à l'époque baroque*, Paris 1977, pp 20 ff.

under the mistaken impression that the latter was the manuscript that Palestrina had prepared for Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585), thus prolonging its errors even more¹⁰⁷.

It is in the context of this development that Guéranger worked to restore the Gregorian chant, which was a remarkable feat considering that he started with very few books of "contemporary" chant, and no reference books with which to work. Guéranger depended on his intuition in setting down two rules for the interpretation of Gregorian chant in the monastery. The first rule was that of concordance of texts: if many books agreed, one had a reasonable chance of having an authentic version. The second rule was that it was necessary to have more faith in manuscripts written in staffless neumes, because they were more likely to be authentic. In this way, with his personal aesthetic taste, he trained the monks to sing. This method was crude, but it was said that the chant was not better interpreted elsewhere¹⁰⁸. Guéranger forbade them to "hammer out" the melodies, but to sing them very freely and lightly. This crude method was not sufficient to effect a real restoration of the chant, and it was necessary to do a scientific research on the most authentic manuscripts, in order to find out what the composers intended. It was not only intended as an academic exercise in the history of art and musicology; Gregorian chant was part of and was at the service of the liturgy. It was necessary to go to the sources, as for the texts and ceremonies of the liturgy.

4.2. The improvement of the chant books

Guided by good intuition and common sense, Guéranger charged two of his monks, Paul Jausions (1834-1870) and Joseph Pothier (1835-1923), with the preparation of a new edition of the chant books. After copying and studying the old manuscripts, they produced a *Directorium chori* in 1864 for use at Solesmes. This book used a notation without rhythmical values, but one retaining the traditional grouping of the notes. In 1880, five years after the death of Dom Guéranger, Pothier published *Les mélodies gregoriennes d'après la tradition*, which gave the key to the neumes, describing and explaining them with precision. The laws of oratorical rhythm were better defined and more solidly established, and the role and nature of the Latin accent brought to light¹⁰⁹. This book was highly praised at the congress of Arezzo in 1882. In 1883 he published the *Liber gradualis*, which earned him the title of "restorer of the Gregorian melodies". The melodies of the Mass were here reconstructed according to the ancient manuscripts available to the editor. The *Antiphonale* for the Divine Office appeared in 1891.

The *Graduale* of Dom Pothier was bitterly attacked by those who held to the truncated and altered Regensburg edition. In its defence Dom Andre Mocquereau (1849-1930) undertook the publication of some of the primary manuscript sources in the periodical *Paléographie musicale* (1888). In the second and third volumes, he traced a typical chant in more than two hundred antiphoners of different origins, dating from the ninth to the seventeenth centuries, to prove that the ancient melodies had been in fact rediscovered, not invented, and that these chants were indeed traditional. Certain studies of Dom Mocquereau in the *Paléographie musicale* on the Latin tonic accent and the *cursus* in relation to the Gregorian melody

¹⁰⁷ Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol III, New York-Washington 1967, p 450.

¹⁰⁸ Soltner, op cit., p 88 § 4.

¹⁰⁹ Pothier J., *Les mélodies gregoriennes d'après la tradition*, Solesmes 1881.

awakened new interest in the rules of the composition of Gregorian chant, and revealed the grave mutilations in the editions in use in the late nineteenth century¹¹⁰.

All this research laid the groundwork for the reform of St. Pius X in 1903-1904. Dom Mocquereau participated in the work of the Vatican commission for revising the official Vatican texts. To this end, he and his monks prepared comparative tables of each melody from some thirty manuscripts of varying origin in which the versions of each neume were written in columns. Although this research *in toto* was not used for the first books of the Vatican edition, more than 2,000 individual changes and corrections derived from this work were made in the *Graduale Vaticanum* of 1907 which is itself based on the 1903 edition of the *Liber Usualis* prepared by Solesmes. But to this day, the Vatican books lack the characteristic rhythmic markings of the Solesmes books.

Dom Pothier has been responsible for new compositions such as for the Proper of the Sacred Heart and of Christ the King. The tradition of new compositions continues with the Propers of new feasts in the Church's calendar.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the monks of Solesmes published in 1974 a rearranged Gradual for the Missal of Paul VI, and they are still working on the edition of a new Antiphoner to sing the Office from the *Liturgia Horarum*. The endless work of research continues, and more is being discovered as more old texts are found.

¹¹⁰ Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol XIII, p 419. Chapter 5

5. EVALUATION OF GUÉRANGER'S LITURGICAL WORK

Having exposed the historic liturgical situation of 19th century France, the life of Dom Guéranger and the foundation of Solesmes, and having discussed his liturgical theology, what will now be examined is the influence that Guéranger had on the rest of the Church, especially after his death. Even during his lifetime, Guéranger was harshly criticised, and his approach has been studied by posterity. In the monumental work of this pioneer of the liturgical movement, there are certainly many failings, for he had little literature with which to work. He lacked the scientific commentaries of our own times; he had whatever liturgical texts that were available to him, the writings of the Fathers and the works of a few noteworthy liturgists. For the rest, his work was entirely original and a result of his intuition.

5.1. The great intuitions of Dom Guéranger

Guéranger has been praised for his work by the Popes, notably Pius IX and Saint Pius X. They saw in him a zeal for a true piety based on the liturgy, his hatred of heresy and a love of the purity of orthodoxy¹¹¹. Guéranger's main attitude was that of a profound love of the Church and loyalty to the successor of Saint Peter. Although he was an ultramontanist, he was much less excessively so than many of his contemporaries. He had a deep aversion for Jansenism and rationalism, and he believed these to be the roots of the problems in the French Church of his time¹¹². He had the intention and courage to break away from the traditionalism of Lamennais and to assert his own independence; he sought the truth, and refused all exaggeration. Guéranger's vision of the liturgy is an essentially theological one; he saw the liturgy only in relation to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation and the salvation of the human race¹¹³. He clearly saw that the liturgy was the first prayer, not merely a mechanical function to perform *outside* the spiritual life. This is his great intuition which is of great consequence. He saw the need to guide the people to a true participation in the sacred mysteries, by participating in the liturgy. He saw that the liturgy must be *beautiful*, embracing human art and culture, to show the incarnational aspect of worship. This intuition has been vindicated in modern times:

*"The one and true apologia of Christianity can be reduced to two arguments: the Saints, expression of the Church, and art, the fruit of her womb. The Lord is made credible by the magnificence of holiness and by that of art which have blossomed within the community of believers, more than skilful evasions that apologists have elaborated to justify obscure aspects which, alas, abandon the human vicissitudes of the Church. If the Church must continue to convert and, therefore to humanise the world, how can she renounce beauty in her liturgy, united in an indissociable way to love and, at the same time, to the splendour of the Resurrection? No, Christians must not be content with little, they must continue to make of their Church a place of beauty - therefore of truth, without which the world becomes the first circle of hell"*¹¹⁴.

¹¹¹ Rousseau O., *Histoire du mouvement liturgique*, Paris 1945, p 41.

¹¹² Johnson C., *Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875): a liturgical theologian*, Rome 1984, p 422.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p 424.

¹¹⁴ Ratzinger J. Card., *Entretien sur la foi*, Paris 1985, p 154.

Another great intuition of his was the question of change and evolution in the liturgy. He was no immobilist. He maintained that liturgy could change and develop, but that this evolution must be in accord with Tradition and be effected by the competent authority of the Church. This issue is of some interest in the context of the current controversy surrounding Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre¹¹⁵.

The main aim for Guéranger was that the liturgy should be the means of sanctification of the people of God, and not merely a subject of study for archaeologists and specialists. The liturgy is a living reality and the life-blood of the Church. Guéranger's work in pioneering the liturgical movement was essentially pastoral, and many of his modern day critics lack this pastoral sense. This is evident when their liturgical practice proves to be a failure, leading the people to confusion and indifference.

5.2. The limitations of Dom Guéranger

One of Guéranger's harshest critics is Father Louis Bouyer of the French Oratory. Bouyer's principal charge against Guéranger is that he was a *medievalist*, that he saw in the middle ages the perfection of the liturgy, seeking to restore to it all the details of medieval ritual, even establishing an artificial community to celebrate it. To resume this criticism, Bouyer understood that Guéranger had formed part of the traditionalist reaction against rationalism and Baroque Catholicism. He saw the intellectual weakness of traditionalism, as Guéranger himself understood in breaking away from Lamennais. Bouyer identifies the theories of Bonald and le Maistre with archaeologism and a systematic quest for the archaic, that the adoption of these theories by Solesmes would definitively fossilise the liturgy. He considers the worship of Solesmes to be better than Baroque liturgy. He understands that Guéranger's life coincided with the Gothic revival, so it was only logical that Guéranger should *gothicise* the liturgy. Bouyer maintains that such a liturgical reform would have been impossible in an existing congregation, so Guéranger had to found his own. Guéranger is said to have made the Real Presence the central point of the liturgy rather than the Sacrificial Action. Bouyer maintains that Guéranger's scholarship was weak. The *Institutions liturgiques* and *l'Année liturgique* were said to be of "sham" scholarship, and he accuses their author for exalting the Roman rite of Saint Pius V as being the only pure and perfectly Catholic liturgy and for failing to distinguish the neo-Gallican liturgies from other traditional and approved particular rites. Bouyer considers his criticism as *bold but well founded*¹¹⁶.

Some of these criticisms are indeed well-founded, others are exaggerated, that Guéranger would have denied. However, some of Bouyer's points need to be examined. Concerning medievalism, it is true that some of Guéranger's contemporaries were enamoured of the middle ages, whilst being somewhat ignorant of the realities of the darker sides of history. Guéranger was in fact opposed to a neo-Gothic revival¹¹⁷. He had a great love of the medieval monastic life and the culture of the time, but he recognised that these were things of the past. His preference in history was in fact for the early Church of the Patristic era. The accusation of medievalism stems from Guéranger's desire to found liturgical reform on the tradition. The

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp 141-142.

¹¹⁶ Bouyer L., *Life and liturgy*, London 1956, pp 10-14.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, op cit., p 423 note 10. "*Quand donc reverrons-nous les merveilles des siècles catholiques? Sera-ce quand nous aurons beaucoup de cathédrales rebâties dans le style du XIII^e siècle, beaucoup de pastiches des arts du moyen âge? Non*". IL 2, 283.

most logical step was to look back to the period which predated the liturgical problems against which he fought. If any weakness is implied, it must not be forgotten that Guéranger lived in a turbulent time, when as a result of the political upheavals in France, the whole basis of religion had been called into question.

As for intellectual weakness, it is harsh to judge a man who was a pioneer in his field, lacking many of the essential tools of study. If Bouyer had found himself in Guéranger's time, he may have experienced the same difficulties. As for the traditionalist influence on Guéranger, he fails to record that this influence lasted only a short time, and that Guéranger sought the middle way. Guéranger's conservative tendency was inevitable considering the historic circumstances. In such a context, the Church has shown similar reactions, such as the conservatism of the Council of Trent concerning the liturgy, faced with the crisis of protestantism and decadence within the Church.

It is true that Solesmes was founded for the restoration of the liturgy, but the Abbey was primarily destined for the restoration of the monastic life which had totally disappeared in France. Bouyer's accusation that Guéranger conceived an artificial community is not justified. Guéranger's intention was clear, and from his writings, a monastic vocation as integral as that of any true monk is manifest. Guéranger's insistence on the aspect of the Real Presence is inevitable considering the historical context of the mid 19th century. To shift the emphasis to the Sacrificial Action required decades of more profound theological thinking, and it would be unjust to attempt to refute Guéranger in the light of modern scholarship.

As for the indictment of considering the Roman Rite to be the only true Catholic liturgy, it is not true as Guéranger recognised all traditional liturgies, considering them to be of equal right and dignity. He held that the Roman Rite had a certain pre-eminence over the others. This is due to his ultramontanism; in fact his work led to the abandonment of the particular liturgies in France. He did not consider the Roman liturgy to be perfect; he welcomed the possibility of a reform of the Roman Breviary. What he fought against, and rightly so, was arbitrary change in the liturgy by individuals without reference to the authority of the Church, a fact which destroys the whole purpose and theology of the liturgy¹¹⁸. This intuition of Guéranger which has influenced the whole liturgical movement was his opposition to *subjectivism* in the worship of the Church.

Guéranger can be justly blamed for writing in a polemic style, which frequently indicates a lack of scholarship. Many polemic authors of the 19th century wrote from a defensive point of view, and many of these doctrinal controversies were drawn out over many years. In writing *Difficulties of Anglicans*, Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890) could not avoid in his work some measure of controversial writing against the Church of England to support the truth of Catholicism. Had Guéranger been less polemical, his work may have been more scientific and better developed, proving his point by irrefutable proof of the facts. According to Bouyer, he was not always historically accurate¹¹⁹. Despite Guéranger's easily excused weaknesses, he has been hailed by posterity as one of the most erudite theologians of the 19th century, and it is to him that the liturgical movement owes its birth.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p 425 § 4.

¹¹⁹ Bouyer, op cit., p 14.

5.3. The radiance of Dom Guéranger

During the lifetime of Guéranger, many new monasteries of the Solesmes Congregation were founded and lived according to his liturgical ideas. It is above all by monasticism that Guéranger had so much influence on the liturgical life of the Church¹²⁰. His written works were widely read, but many came to visit the monastic foundations to make retreats, and were moved by the beauty of the celebration.

5.3.1. His influence on the whole liturgical movement

With Guéranger began the liturgical movement which radiated through the life of the Church of the 19th century. Many priests and even bishops came to Solesmes and were so impressed by the dignity of the Offices that they attempted to improve the liturgical life of their own churches. Fr Pie, who was later to become Bishop of Poitiers, wrote to Guéranger in 1841:

“For some time I have been so convinced that our century must be led to the liturgy to become Catholic, that I have exerted myself greatly in my little environment, and am still thinking of preaching all winter on the saints, angels, reliquaries, feasts, services, churches and the bells”¹²¹.

Guéranger's written works, especially the *Institutions liturgiques* and *l'Année liturgique* served as programmes for the nascent liturgical movement, which was born in the Benedictine Order, and developed with the spread of new monasteries.

The moment the liturgical movement really took off was when it received the attention of the Holy See. With Saint Pius X, efforts to renew the liturgy entered into a new era. Before he acceded to the See of Peter, the movement depended on individuals who were inspired by the work of the monasteries, but only the highest authority could really effect a far reaching influence on the whole Church. Giuseppe Melchior Sarto (1835-1914), the latter Pius X, was a man of different background to many of his predecessors; he was of humble birth, and had much pastoral experience as a parish priest and as a diocesan bishop. Sarto was a man of great erudition and had studied brilliantly. He had a taste for liturgy and for plain-chant, to which he devoted much of his pastoral ministry as a parish priest. His parish work paralleled that of Guéranger at Solesmes: he revived a piety based on the liturgy. Part of his plan to *Instaurare omnia in Christo* was not only to fight heresy but to restore the liturgy. We see clearly his predispositions to receive the ideas of Dom Guéranger. As Patriarch of Venice, he published a pastoral letter on the 1st May 1895 on the liturgical chant of the Church, much of which was incorporated in his *Motu proprio* and *Tra le sollecitudini* of 1903¹²².

Cardinal Giuseppe Sarto became Pope Pius X on the 4th August 1903, and he began with great firmness with the French government, owing to the anti-clerical laws of the time. The first step in his liturgical reform was concerning the liturgical chant. He was severe in regard

¹²⁰ Rousseau, op cit., p 94.

¹²¹ Heyer, *The Catholic Church from 1648 to 1870*, p 140 note 1.

¹²² The two documents of Saint Pius X are found in: A. Bugnini, *Documenta pontificia ad instauratorem liturgicam spectantia (1903-1953)*, Rome 1943, pp 1-8; 10-26.

to music of a secular culture, such as masses in an operatic style such as those of Haydn and Mozart, and he insisted that church music should be of a more sacred nature.

Another important step of Pius X was the reform of the Breviary and the liturgical calendar in 1911. Guéranger had desired a reform in the Breviary; now this reform was realised. With Saint Pius X, the liturgical movement received the green light of the Holy See, and the work of the monasteries and pastoral liturgists was given full approval and official encouragement¹²³.

5.3.2. The influence of Guéranger on Beuron and Maredsous

The significance of the Beuron monastery resides in the liturgical revival in Germany, Austria and Bohemia. The notable personality in the foundation of Beuron was Dom Maurus Wolter (1825-1890), whose baptismal name was Rudolf. He did his studies in Bonn, and was awarded a Doctorate in 1849. He was ordained priest in the diocese of Cologne in 1850. He joined his brother Placid at the Abbey of Saint Paul without the Walls in Rome in 1856. The two brothers made their profession in 1857, and both returned to Prussia in 1860 where they founded the monastery at Beuron, a former Augustinian priory, in 1863. Maurus Wolter became the monastery's first Abbot¹²⁴.

In the early days of the new Abbey, Wolter sent novices to various monasteries in Bavaria, Austria and Switzerland. Not satisfied with this arrangement, he arranged for his novices to be received at Solesmes, and himself, spent three months there to profit of the experience and good counsel of Guéranger. At the instigation of his brother, Dom Placid Wolter also experienced the life of Solesmes. The passage of the Beuron monks at Solesmes was a great revelation for them. Not only did they appreciate the monastic and liturgical restoration of Dom Guéranger, they understood that this experience could lead to a similar restoration in Germany. The first years of Beuron were directly inspired by the liturgical life of Solesmes¹²⁵.

The Congregation of Beuron was approved by the Holy See in 1884, and Dom Wolter had been assisted by Guéranger in writing the Constitutions. Wolter was directly inspired in his writings by Guéranger's principles. Daughter houses were founded from Beuron in Belgium, England, Austria and Germany. In 1875, the community was driven into exile by Bismarck's *Kul-turkampf* and they found shelter in Tyrol and Bohemia. In 1887, Wolter was able to return to Beuron to finish his days, having made, thanks to the exile, two important new foundations¹²⁶.

Under the Wolter brothers, Beuron became an important liturgical centre. The work of Dom Suitbert Baumer (1845-1894) and Dom Anselm Schott (1843-1896) is particularly noteworthy in the progress of the liturgical movement. Together, they published in 1884 the first edition of the *Messbuch der heiligen Kirche*, a bilingual missal for the use of the laity. A little later in 1893, they produced the *Vesperbuch*. Both of these works contained numerous explanations

¹²³ Rousseau, op cit., pp 201-215.

¹²⁴ New Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol XIV, New York—Washington 1967, p 990.

¹²⁵ Rousseau, op cit., pp 94-95.

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp 102-107.

taken from Guéranger's *l'Année liturgique*¹²⁷. The *Schottbucher* became very popular among German-speaking Catholics.

The Abbey of Maredsous was founded in 1872 by monks from Beuron, as a result of the previously mentioned *Kulturkampf*. Since the death of Dom Wolter, one of Maredsous' most distinguished Abbots was Dom Columba Marmion (1858-1923) who is esteemed for his profound spiritual writing. In 1920, Maredsous became part of the Belgian congregation: and Maredsous' most significant foundation for the liturgical movement was the Abbey of Mont César in Louvain (1899)¹²⁸, which is famed for the work of Dom Lambert Beauduin (1873-1960)¹²⁹. The significance of Maredsous was the publication of bilingual missals for the laity. The liturgical movement was now centred in Belgium and Germany, as the religious had been expelled from France as a result of the anti-clerical legislation against the Church. The consequent development is out of the scope of this study, which concentrates itself on the direct influence of Dom Guéranger.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp 108-109.

¹²⁸ New Cath. Encycl., vol IX, p 198.

¹²⁹ Cf. Haguin A., *Dom Lambert Beauduin et le renouveau liturgique*, Gembloux 1970.

6. CONCLUSION

What relevance has Guéranger's work for our times? It has been the beginning and chief inspiration of the whole liturgical movement. It is through Guéranger's ideas that one can come to a just understanding of the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council. Without an understanding of Guéranger's principles in the light of the posterior liturgical movement, there is a danger of misinterpreting the *spirit* of the Council's teaching, leading to subjectivism, unauthorised innovation and arbitrary change beyond the authentic directives of the Church. Much of the Conciliar Constitution is inspired by Guéranger's principles and theological insight. If our pastors would study the liturgy, the work of the liturgical movement and the conciliar texts, much suffering and confusion among the faithful could be avoided. As Guéranger advocated, this should be required of all who aspire to the priesthood.

One of the main causes of the malaise in the Church to-day is a superficial and pietistic approach to the liturgy, leading to secularisation which gives rise to bitterness and indifference among the faithful, exactly as Guéranger had predicted. Despite all the work of the liturgical movement to restore a sense of the liturgy to the people of God, eucharistic devotion is frequently separated from the essence of the liturgy which is the *mysterium* of the Incarnate God. As the faithful become bitter, leading to the traditionalist reaction, and as more stay at home on a Sunday morning because the liturgy they would find in their local church bores them, the more it becomes clear that the Church has need of a new liturgical movement. There is much to be hoped from the monasteries and from young curates with wit and initiative. It is hoped that young liturgical scholars with a profound sense of the liturgy will exercise much influence on the Episcopate and on the Roman authorities. Guéranger's expose of the anti-liturgical heresy is not difficult to recognise in a situation where many of our pastors do as they please, through a misunderstanding of the nature of the liturgy. In a search for relevance and creativity, they destroy much of what is good, noble and beautiful in the liturgy - that the people no longer desire to participate in the sacred mysteries, which are obscured by a barrage of improvised platitudes and banality.

The situation was worse in the early 1970's when Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre established the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X at Ecône. Frankly, he went too far, at least in the persons of many he has ordained, denying any possibility of change and evolution in the liturgy. In the early days of the Society, the prevailing attitude was more moderate, and they were provisionally approved by the Church. However, as a result of the suspension *a divinis* of 1976, the Society became entrenched in a more immobilist position, and they are now on the brink of formal schism in the shadow of the forthcoming episcopal consecrations.

The Society has tried to base its position on the principles of Dom Guéranger, seeing a parallel between the official Roman liturgy of Paul VI and the anti-liturgical heretical aspects of the neo-Gallican liturgies. Only posterity, in the light of a future liturgical reform, will be able to judge as to whether this intuition has any foundation. It may be possible to say that the new liturgy has a strongly synthetic character, but the fact that it was regularly promulgated by a Pope demands its recognition as a Catholic and orthodox rite. It is easier to criticise the unofficial distortions of the liturgy in the light of Guéranger's teaching. Archbishop Lefebvre has in fact gone much further than Guéranger in affirming that the Mass of Saint Pius V was *la Messe de toujours*, as if this rite was not itself the fruit of centuries of development. In the suit of the Indult of October 1984, the old rite of Mass is again authorised in the Church, but it

is utterly wrong to say that this rite is in some way fixed that it cannot be reformed and adapted to new conditions in the mission of the Church.

Many of the Archbishop's criticisms are lucid, but unfortunately, his writing is too polemical and unscientific. He had much experience in the foreign missions, but lacks a solid grounding in liturgical theology and history. He bases many of his criticisms on caricature, using the example of the worst possible and most extreme liturgical abuses to support his criticism of the general situation. It is not difficult to see a parallel between mennaisian traditionalism and many modern traditionalists, as both these schools of thought are wanting in solid scholarship. We may be thankful for the great moderation and prudence of Dom Guéranger, lacking to many modern traditionalists and reformers.

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