

Rubricarum Instructum

Apostolic Letter of Pope John XXIII

Given of his own accord (*motu proprio*)

July 25, 1960

The New Body of Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal is Approved

It has been the constant aim of the Apostolic See, especially since the Council of Trent, to define more accurately and arrange more suitably the body of rubrics by which the Church's public worship is ordered and governed. Thus many things have been emended, changed and added in the course of time. The consequent growth of the system of rubrics has sometimes been unsystematic and detrimental to the original clarity and simplicity of the whole system.

Hence it is not surprising that our predecessor Pope Pius XII, of happy memory, acceding to the wishes of many of the bishops, should have judged it expedient to reduce the rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal to a simpler form in certain respects. This simplification was enacted by a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites dated March 23, 1955.

Then in the following year, 1956, when preparatory studies were being conducted for a general liturgical reform, our predecessor decided to survey the opinions of the bishops on the liturgical improvement of the Roman Breviary. After duly weighing the answers of the bishops, he judged that it was time to attack the problem of a general and systematic revision of the rubrics of the Breviary and Missal. This question he referred to the special committee of experts who had been appointed to study the general liturgical reform. Then the problem became ours. After we had decided, under the inspiration of God, to convene an ecumenical

council, we turned over in our mind what was to be done about this project begun by our predecessor. After mature reflection, we came to the conclusion that the more important principles governing a general liturgical reform should be laid before the members of the hierarchy at the forthcoming ecumenical council, but that the above-mentioned improvement of the rubrics of the Breviary and Missal should no longer be put off.

We ourselves, therefore, *of our own accord (motu proprio)* and with full knowledge, have seen fit to approve by our apostolic authority the body of these rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal prepared by the experts of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and carefully revised by the aforesaid pontifical commission for general liturgical reform. And we decree as follows:

1) We command that, beginning on the first day of January of next year, 1961, all those who follow the Roman rite shall observe the new code of rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal arranged under three headings—*General Rubrics*, *General Rubrics of the Roman Breviary* and *General Rubrics of the Roman Missal*—to be published shortly by our Sacred Congregation of Rites. As for those who observe some other Latin rite, they are bound to conform as soon as possible both to the new code of rubrics and to the calendar, in all those things which are not strictly proper to their own rite.

2) On the same day, January 1, 1961, the *General Rubrics* of the Roman Breviary and Missal, as well as the *Additions and Variations* to the rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal according to the bull *Divino afflatu* of our predecessor St. Pius X, which have hitherto been prefixed to these books, shall become inoperative. As the provisions of the decree *On the Simplification of the Rubrics* dated March 23, 1955, have been incorporated into this new edition of the rubrics, this general decree of the Sacred Congregation of

Rites shall likewise become inoperative. Finally, any decrees and replies on doubtful points issued by the same Congregation which do not agree with this new form of the rubrics shall be abrogated.

3) Likewise, statutes, privileges, indulgences and customs of any kind whatsoever, including those that are centenary and immemorial, even if they are worthy of special and individual mention, shall be revoked if they are opposed to these rubrics.

4) The publishers of liturgical books who are duly approved by the Holy See may prepare new editions of the Roman Breviary and Missal arranged according to the new code of rubrics. In order to insure the necessary uniformity of the new editions, however, the Sacred Congregation of Rites shall issue special instructions.

5) In the new editions of the Roman Breviary or Missal, the texts of the rubrics mentioned in No.2 above shall be omitted, and the texts of the new rubrics put in their place. That is, the *General Rubrics* and the *General Rubrics of the Roman Breviary* shall be prefixed to the Breviary; and similarly the *General Rubrics* and the *General Rubrics of the Roman Missal* shall be prefixed to the Missal.

6) Finally, all those whose responsibility it is, shall see to it as soon as possible that the special calendars and propers, whether diocesan or religious conform to the principles and ideals of the new edition of the rubrics and of the calendar. These calendars and propers are subject to the approval of the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

Having firmly established these points, we consider it fitting to our apostolic office to add some advice.

The fact is that this new arrangement of the rubrics has two effects. On the one hand, the whole structure of the rubrics of the Roman

Breviary and Missal is reduced to a better form, distributed in a clearer order and brought together into a single text. On the other hand, some special modifications have also been introduced, by which the Divine Office is somewhat shortened. This shortening was petitioned by very many of the bishops, in view especially of the constantly increasing burden of pastoral cares laid upon many priests. In a fatherly spirit we urge these and all who are bound to the recitation of the Divine Office to make up for any shortening of that Office by greater attentiveness and devotion. Moreover, since the reading of the Fathers of the Church is sometimes cut down to a certain extent, we earnestly exhort all the clergy to be sure to have at hand for reading and meditation the works of the Fathers, which are so full of wisdom and piety.

Now let those things which we have decreed and established by this letter, given of our own accord, be considered as ratified and confirmed, anything to the contrary notwithstanding, including that which is worthy of special and individual mention.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of July, in the year 1960, the second year of our pontificate.

POPE JOHN XXIII

General Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites

Promulgating the New Code of the Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal

By this general decree the Sacred Congregation of Rites promulgates and declares to have been promulgated the new code of rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal, which our Holy Father

Pope John XXIII approved and ordered this Sacred Congregation to publish, by the apostolic letter *Rubricarum Instructum*, given *motu proprio* on July 25 of this year. This new code is to be inserted into the new editions of the Roman Breviary and Missal and is to be observed by all concerned, beginning January 1 of next year, 1961.

In order that the liturgical books hitherto in use may still be used, there are appended to the code of rubrics the “Variations” by which the present Breviaries and Missals as well as the Martyrology may be adapted.

From the office of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, July 26, 1960,
✠CAIETANUS Card. CICOGNANI, Ep. Tusculanus, *Praefectus*
L.✠S.

Henricus Dante, *a secretis*