



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

The Feast of Christ the King-November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020

***Readings: Ezekiel 34: 11-12. 15-17, Psalm 22, 1 Corinthians, 15: 20-26. 28, Matthew 25: 31-46***

I hope that you are all sitting down and strapped safely into your chairs with a large glass of brandy to hand. What I have to say to you this morning may come as a bit of a shock.

In May, quietly and without fanfare, a document emerged from the Cardinal Sarah, head honcho of all matters liturgical, and the ICEL, the body that sorts out the English translation of the original Latin for our use, with instruction on change. (I can hear the groans from here). The change does not affect your responses and, if I didn't tell you about it, you would probably never notice. The Cardinal, who is a deeply sound chap and would have made an excellent Pope, had not the brethren been so terrified of his un-European intensity and experience, has been exercised by one word. It is indeed the word 'ONE'.

Let me explain. At the end of the Collects the priest prays, 'through Our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen'

According to the new regs. the word 'ONE' has to go. Why?

Well, it's this.

The historic formula at the end of these prayers is:

‘DEUS per omnia saecula saeculorum.’

There is no mention of the word ‘ONE’.

‘Hold on,’ you cry, ‘does that mean that we don’t believe that the Holy Trinity is ONE God anymore?’

NO, it does not. You see if we read the whole formula we see that, although it encapsulates the fundamental Trinitarian belief of the Christian Faith, the word ‘DEUS’ here refers to Jesus. He is indeed GOD but He is not ‘a god’ on His own. Let me quote exactly what the Cardinal and the Liturgists write:

*‘The addition of “one” could be construed as mistaken or problematic. On the one hand, it could serve to undermine the statement of the unique dignity of the Son within the Trinity which the Latin formulae so strongly convey. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as saying that Jesus is “one God.” Either or both of these interpretations is injurious to the faith of the Church. The “one” risks suggesting that Jesus became a god independent of the Blessed Trinity and is one god among many. Contrary to the Arian heresy, Jesus Christ, who is God, did not become God. He is God from all eternity, and taking human flesh at his Incarnation, became man. According to the ‘lex orandi,’ what we pray needs to express what the Church believes, requiring that, in liturgical formulae, we uphold the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. It is clear from the Latin texts that the doxology emphasises the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who as the Incarnate Son, intercedes on our behalf to the Father, the prayer being made “in the unity of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, the Son’s role of priestly mediation is made clear. The doxological phrase was coined in Africa during the fourth century as a means to combat the Arian heresy. The reference “Deus” is intended Christologically. It’s about Jesus.*

Now why does this matter?

Is this another case of Rome fiddling while the Church burns?

After all it’s not as if millions walked away from Church because of an

otherwise unnoticed textual Christological ambiguity. Nor is it likely that the great army of the lapsed will come barrowing back crying, 'Thank God that's been sorted. Now I can come back to Mass with a clear conscience.'

Well, brothers and sisters, I can only commend it to you as a small sign from a serious player, Cardinal Sarah.

There has been a growing habit, in the course of my lifetime, for Christians, Clergy and lay alike, to domesticate Jesus. The tension between the divine and the human, between the godhead and the manhood breaking in favour of the latter. The emphasis on the transcendent obliterated by the familiarity of the immanent. What became casually known, in the wake of the Council, 'God Almighty becomes God All Matey.'

In some other ecclesial bodies this careered into a doctrinal and moral retreat from Jesus as God and a rebranding of Him as simply a good bloke doing his best in rather trying cultural circumstances. Put bluntly, the modernists said: 'We now know better than Jesus'. Such is the road to ruin.

What the real Church actually believes is that JESUS is GOD. He did not become God. He always was, is and will be. If that is not true then our religion collapses like a house of cards. If He is not fully Man then He cannot represent us. If He is not fully God then He cannot save us.

If we are in any doubt then this morning's Gospel, which Jesus gives us, should leave us in no doubt. Here He is, at the end of time, occupying the Judgement seat over all mankind and dealing with us according to how we treated those creatures made in the image of God, our fellow human beings. JESUS IS GOD. That is the Gospel.

If we have tinkered with ancient formularies of prayer, Cardinal Sarah is saying, then it's time to untinker. If we have cosied up to godless atheistic regimes for a bit of peace and quiet then we are not telling the truth. If we go round mouthing the syncretistic pap about all religions being equally

valid then we are betraying the truth. If we applaud apostates who traduce the Faith simply because they are in power, we no longer walk with Jesus.

Either Jesus is GOD or He isn't. If He is, as we proclaim, the King, then all things are subservient to Him and, if we say anything less, we lie with fatal consequence for other souls as well as for our own.