

Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments

To the Presidents of the world's various Episcopal Conferences.
Circular Letter

Quattuor abhinc annos

["Four years ago"]

[Translation *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, October 22, 1984]

[No protocol number, Congregational insignia, or facsimile of signatures appear in the text taken from the website noted at the end of the text of the letter given below. Webmaster - NCCL.]

October 3, 1984

Most Rev. Excellency:

Four years ago, by order of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, the bishops of the whole Church were invited to present a report:

- concerning the way in which the priests and faithful of their dioceses had received the Missal promulgated in 1970 by authority of Pope Paul VI in accordance with the decisions of the Second Vatican Council;
- concerning the difficulties arising in the implementation of the liturgical reform;
- concerning possible resistance that may have arisen.

The result of the consultation was sent to all bishops (cf. *Notitiae*, n. 185, December 1981). On the basis of their replies it appeared that the problem of priests and faithful holding to the so-called "Tridentine" rite was almost completely solved.

Since, however, the same problem continues, the Supreme Pontiff, in a desire to meet the wishes of these groups, grants to diocesan bishops the possibility of using an indult whereby priests and faithful, who shall be expressly indicated in the letter of request to be presented to their own bishop, may be able to celebrate Mass by using the Roman Missal according to the 1962 edition, but under the following conditions:

a) That it be made publically [sic] clear beyond all ambiguity that such priests and their respective faithful in no way share the positions of those who call in question the legitimacy and doctrinal exactitude of the Roman Missal promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

b) Such celebration must be made only for the benefit of those groups that request it; in churches and oratories indicated by the bishop (not, however, in parish churches, unless the bishop permits it in extraordinary cases); and on the days and under the conditions fixed by the bishop either habitually or in individual cases.

c) These celebrations must be according to the 1962 Missal and in Latin.

d) There must be no interchanging of texts and rites of the two Missals.

e) Each bishop must inform this Congregation of the concessions granted by him, and at the end of a year from the granting of this indult, he must report on the result of its application.

This concession, indicative of the common Father's solicitude for all his children, must be used in such a way as not to prejudice the faithful observance of the liturgical reform in the life of the respective ecclesial communities.

I am pleased to avail myself of this occasion to express to Your Excellency my sentiments of deep esteem.

Yours devotedly in the Lord.

+Augustin Mayer, Pro-Prefect

+Virgilio Noe, Secretary.

[Above text taken from <http://www.adoremus.org/Quattuorabhincannos.html> , accessed March 7, 2011.]