

Your Excellency Bishop Scharfenberger,

I am writing in order to inform you of something that you may wish to be aware of as the Shepherd of this Diocese.

On the 26th of April, I attended a vigil Mass at Our Lady of Hope Church in Whitehall. Father Rendell Torres is the pastor; however, this particular weekend he was on pilgrimage to Rome for the Canonization of the two Popes. Fr. Michael Taylor was scheduled to fill in, but due to circumstances, was unable to do so. The priest that was found in order to substitute on Saturday was Fr. Richard Broderick, a retired priest of the Diocese. We were blessed to receive a priest for the weekend, especially on such short notice.

Unfortunately, the Mass that was celebrated on Saturday was, as far as my knowledge is capable of discerning, sacrilegious at best. I wish to make you aware of these things, not to slander or harm our priest, but in order that he may be sanctified and brought into understanding of the Church's Liturgy and Doctrine. I also fear for the salvation of the flock which he ministered to on this particular day, and I want for no others to be scandalized or misinformed.

First impressions can be very telling. Father was vested in an alb with a white stole. No chasuble was worn (see *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, or RS 123), and neither amice nor cincture (RS 122) were utilized to cover his collar or tie the alb. However, the attire that Father was in was not the worst of the problems.

Following the Mass I conversed with the sacristan. She was as shocked as I was with the happenings of that past hour. She told me that the first thing that Father Broderick did when he arrived was to remove the altar cross. Fr. Torres has maintained a gorgeous sanctuary and has utilized the *ad populum* Benedictine Altar Arrangement. Fr. Broderick told the sacristan that it interfered with his vision. I assume he was referring to his vision of the congregation during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

During the homily, Father noted that St. Mary Magdalen was the first to see the risen Jesus, and that she has been depicted as the teacher of the Apostles, helping them to believe in the Resurrection. However factual this may be, it led to him then voicing his opinion that "women should be called to ordination." It is my understanding, belief, and conviction that women are never called to sacramental priestly ordination. I worry that those in attendance may be misled from the Truth and may find it acceptable, then, to lobby for and support female ordinations.

At the presentation of the gifts, Father instructed the two laity who brought forth the gifts to raise them up as he prayed the Offertory. At the time of the recitation of this prayer, Father was standing in the aisle while the two lay people raised the pitcher of wine and the ciborium simultaneously. The rubrics of the GIRM regarding this action state, "The priest, standing at the altar, takes the paten with the bread and holding it slightly raised above the altar with both hands, saying in a low tone..." Clearly this rubric was neglected.

In order to validate the concerns that arose out of the beginning of the Mass as well as the homily, I recorded the "Eucharistic Prayer" that Father utilized during the Liturgy. It was not one of the nine

currently promulgated. I have transcribed some of it below for you. The recording of the Canon is slightly difficult to fully transcribe due to the echo of the sanctuary, however if someone were to be interested in listening to it, I would be willing to share it. He not once during the entire Mass used the Roman Missal, but rather used printed-out sheets of paper, even for the Eucharistic Prayer. Following Mass, I caught Father's attention and proceeded to ask him which Eucharistic Prayer he used. He reported that it was found in the "Roman Sacramentary," which, to clarify, I asked if he meant the Roman Missal. He replied to the effect that he didn't know what "you call it," but that it is used all over the Diocese. I told him that I had never heard the particular Prayer before and I have been to Masses all over the Diocese. His reply to this was, "follow me around and you'll hear it more often."

The Prayer of Consecration that was used during Saturday's Mass seems to stem from the prayer composed by Bugnini, which is not supposed to be used, as the translations of the Eucharistic Prayer currently promulgated are the only ones that are still licit. According to EWTN, the principle of "Ecclesia suplet" ('the Church supplies') does not make up for invalidity when the matter or form (the essential elements and correct words) are omitted or altered." Thus, the Sacrament very well may have been invalid.

The transcription of the Prayer of Consecration used:

"You have sent Jesus Your Son to love us and to watch over us. He promised He would send His Spirit to be with us always. May that Spirit be present now over these holy gifts we bring, and over us who offer them, that they may become the Body and Blood of the Risen Jesus. On the night before Jesus (met death?), He invited His friends to the table. He took bread and blessed it and broke it and shared it with them and said, 'take this bread all of you and eat it. This is my Body which will be given up for you.'

"After Supper Jesus took the cup and blessed it and passed it to His disciples and said, 'take this cup drink from it, all of you. This is the cup of My Blood, the Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant. It will be shed for you and all mankind so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of Me.'"

At the time of consecration, with one hand Father took the ciborium, and with the other reached into the ciborium to draw out a handful of hosts. He then proceeded to recite the Words of Consecration and elevated the ciborium and the handful of hosts. Then he replaced the hosts in the ciborium and set it down on the altar as prescribed.

Twice during the Mass he brought the congregation's attention to the fact that the altar server's birthday was the day previous. The first time, he did so during the Prayer of the Faithful, and then proceeded to initiate applause for it at that time. At that same time, he addressed the congregation and asked for anyone else who was celebrating a birthday, anniversary, or special event to announce it so that the congregation may give acknowledgement. Applause ensued then as well. He once again brought the server's birthday to our attention near the close of the Mass, before the Final Blessing and Dismissal. He led the server to the center of the sanctuary, in front of the altar, and after a second round of applause for his birthday, commended him also on an act of charity that he participated in earlier that day. While acts of mercy and charity are commendable and work to glorify God, he drew attention to the young man at a completely inappropriate time (during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass) and with applause. Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "Wherever applause breaks out in the liturgy because of some human achievement, it is a sure sign that

the essence of liturgy has totally disappeared and been replaced by a kind of religious entertainment” (Spirit of the Liturgy p. 198).

I have spoken with Fr. Torres upon his arrival back in the country. He has read and approved my letter and has given me permission to send it.

I am aware that, unfortunately, liturgical abuse has become widespread, in varying degrees of severity, throughout the Diocese. It is my duty as a faithful, informed Catholic, to bring to light these abuses and work to eradicate them for the sake of the Liturgy and the piety thereof. “...It is not possible to be silent about the abuses, even quite grave ones, against the nature of the Liturgy and the Sacraments as well as the tradition and the authority of the Church, which in our day not infrequently plague liturgical celebrations in one ecclesial environment or another” (RS 4). I fully understand that it is impossible to extinguish completely all liturgical abuse at once. In order for the process to begin, one must draw attention to it and the fact that it is wrong. I pray that you will consider this and also pray about a solution.

Thank you for your time, service and prayers. Please be assured of my prayers for you and the Diocese.

Peace in Christ,