

Report of THE NETHERLANDS

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<http://www.ecclesiadei.nl/>.

After a rather positive letter of the Dutch Bishops welcoming the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* in July 2007, and the publication of the Book “**Het Heilig Missoffer**” with the full text of the motu proprio, the accompanying letter to the bishops and the Latin-Dutch text of the ordinary prayers of the Traditional Latin Liturgy, called the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite already in August of 2007 a hopeful start and a new era could be expected. Especially because in an interview in the German edition of the *l'Osservatore Romano* the secretary of the Bishops Committee on Liturgy spoke about a proposal to teach the traditional Latin liturgy in the seminaries.

On the same day that the motu proprio was published, the Dutch Latin Mass Society, which since 1969 has supported the use of Latin for the Missal of 1969 only and is under full control of the neoconservative Dutch Bishops, published a press bulletin at which they stated to support the traditional Latin liturgy also. It is worth commenting that this society was actively involved in suppressing the traditional Latin liturgy and boycotting the motu proprio *Ecclesia Dei adflicta*. Soon after the publication of the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, Cardinal Simonis, the Archbishop of Utrecht, retired. Because of the delay in appointing a successor, and the celebrations to mark 150 years of the restoration of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands, the discussion of the motu proprio within the bishops conference was delayed to 2008. Therefore the Dutch Bishops were given the benefit of the doubt and no report was provided in 2008. So this report concerns the period 2007 to 2009.

1. *Has the situation improved since 14 September 2007?*

Despite the above mentioned acts by the Dutch Bishops, finally the Dutch Bishops' Conference did not define a common policy concerning the implementation of the motu proprio. As a consequence, the bishops have different opinions about this implementation. And so practically it has been shown that the most of the bishops do not support the implementation of the motu proprio at all. The general attitude is of being extremely passive, discouraging requests, ignoring the traditional liturgy and keeping the faithful in ignorance of the motu proprio by a lack of information combined with disinformation about the traditional Latin liturgy. Two main reasons can be pointed out to that attitude:

- Firstly, the bishops are afraid of the opposition by the modernist-infected priests and/or parish boards. They are afraid of polemics and getting discord inside the Church in the Netherlands and they have not undertaken any measures to solve these problems for many and many years.
- Secondly, most of the current Dutch bishops belongs to the neo-conservatives, having the opinion that the reformed Missal of 1969 has grown organically from the Missal of 1962 according to the wish of Vaticanum II. Therefore, they are reducing the Pope's 'Reform of the reform' to introduce the use of the norms of the Church: in Latin, ad orientem and communion on the tongue. As conservatives they have accepted the motu proprio but found it an unnecessary step backwards and against their efforts to reduce the so many misuses on the Missal of 1969. Recently, the lay secretary-general and Chancellor of the Archbishop of Utrecht as well as the president of the Dutch Latin Liturgy Society, proclaimed that there is hardly any difference between the Missal of 1962 and the reformed Missal of 1969 when the Latin language is used.. Further he proclaimed there is a link between denying the organic growth of the Missal of 1969 and the opposition against Vaticanum II. Certainly he does not realize the writings by Cardinal Ratzinger before he became Pope Benedictus XVI and according to this statement consequently he proclaims even the Pope as being opposite to Vaticanum II.



Contrary to the suggestion given by the secretary of the Bishops' Committee on Liturgy in his interview mentioned above, the seminaries do not teach the seminarians the traditional liturgy at all. Afraid of the very strong opposition by the staff of the seminaries and under the excuse that there is no interest in the traditional Latin liturgy the bishops left that decision to that same staff. At the seminaries the difference between the time before the motu proprio and thereafter is that the negative talk about the traditional Latin liturgy has been changed into ignoring it and keeping the seminarians in the dark and ignorant about that liturgy. However, since March 2009 and against the opposition of a number of priestly staff members at the seminary of St. Jan in 's-Hertogenbosch, a course about the theology of the traditional Latin liturgy has been given, but only because some of the seminarians claimed to have the right to it and showed a letter from the PCED. As a result, 8 of the 12 seminarians now attend a private traditional Latin Mass three days a week at that seminary, despite the opposition.

In some dioceses the situation has been improved in the first year of the motu proprio only by the initiatives of individual relatively young priests. Some priests have attended the training organized by the German Pro Missa Tridentina at the Dutch-German border. Others, especially in the dioceses of 's-Hertogenbosch and Roermond, a number of priests and seminarians have trained and been taught the theology of the traditional Latin Mass by priests of the Fraternity of St. Peter located in Amsterdam. Nowadays, after such intensive meetings with the traditional Latin liturgy like these training sessions, most of these priests would like to celebrate this liturgy solely. Most of these priests are celebrating the traditional Latin liturgy in private and some even weekly in public now.

It is really noticeable that most of these priests had their priestly education at one of the more orthodox seminaries, while the older priests, as well as those from the academic education, are strongly boycotting the implementation of the motu proprio and even suppressing their younger priestly brethren. They also set the faithful against the traditional Latin liturgy by spreading disinformation and creating a mental climate at which the faithful do not request the traditional Latin liturgy, even though they feel themselves attached to it.

In all dioceses you can hear very often the sad comments: "Why should I (we) ask for it, he (the priest) will refuse and work against it". And learning by their experiences they cannot count on support of the bishops. Since that encouraging start, there is hardly any improvement at all during the second year of the motu proprio.

2. Are you having many more Masses - and in different places?

No, after two years of the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* only two Sunday Masses are celebrated regularly each Sunday and Feast day in The Netherlands. At the St. Agnes church in Amsterdam since 14 September 2006 which also includes daily Holy Masses, and at the St. Willibrordus church in Utrecht only on Sundays and Feast days since Easter 2009. Both locations are served by the Fraternity of St. Peter.

The following table gives the number of locations of the Holy Masses celebrated according to the traditional Latin liturgy in the Netherlands and Belgium, including two Holy Masses mentioned above:

	The Netherlands	Belgium
Weekly on Sunday	2	12
Periodically on Sunday	4	4
weekday	3	3
incidental	5	?

Most of the weekly Sunday Masses in Belgium can be found in the French-speaking part of Belgium.

2. Which bishops have reacted positively to Pope Benedict's Motu Proprio?

Archdiocese of Utrecht:

Mgr. Eijk granted a request for the traditional Latin liturgy for the faithful in the St. Willibrordus church in Utrecht, which was given for the use of the Dutch Latin Liturgy Society. However, at the same time, the president of that society, who also is the lay secretary-general and chancellor of the archbishop, Mgr Eijk, and in charge for the archdiocese policy, is strongly organizing a policy of discouraging anyone attending that Mass in the Extraordinary form. The time is fixed at an unfavourable time of 17.30 hours on Sundays.

<http://www.ecclesiadei.nl>: voor de verspreiding van de traditionele Latijnse Liturgie (Tridentijnse Liturgie) overeenkomstig het Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*; Giften en donaties ter ondersteuning van ons apostolaat kunt U overmaken op rekeningnr 60.30.59.252 (ABN-AMRO bank te Delft) t.n.v. Stichting Ecclesia Dei Delft.

Besides the lack of information about the traditional Latin liturgy, the faithful only were given disinformation by priests strongly connected to the Dutch Latin Liturgy Society (DLLS). This disinformation was given in interviews in the only Catholic weekly paper, just before the first two Holy Masses in the Extraordinary form respectively, which were celebrated by a priest of the FSSP then only once a month. The foundation Ecclesia Dei Delft has been criticized by the secretary-general and chancellor of the archbishop for given a written reaction to correct both interviews. Also, recently the secretary-general and chancellor of the archbishop published an article about the traditional Latin Mass which was full of disinformation and in which it was presented as obsolete. This article was really misleading, incorrect, and motivated according to the neoconservative philosophy.

And so, due to this campaign of misinformation nothing has been done to support the implementation of the *motu proprio*; no information, no explanation of the use of the traditional Latin liturgy, even no trial to reach the faithful as well the priests, and no liturgical formation.

Besides the Holy Mass granted in the St. Willibrordus church in Utrecht, one other priest has initiated a Sunday Mass in his parish in Deventer two times a month, despite a lot of resistance by a number of parishioners.

Diocese of Haarlem-Amsterdam:

Mgr. Punt is prepared to grant the FSSP a personal parish, where these priests can work from the St. Agnes church in Amsterdam all over his diocese. Talks are going on. All diocesan priests and faithful can freely contact the priests of the FSSP for information about the traditional Latin liturgy.

Diocese of Rotterdam:

Mgr Van Luyn promised the Foundation Ecclesia Dei Delft to found a centre for the traditional Latin liturgy in his diocese, like St. Agnes in Amsterdam, more than a year ago. He ordered his vicar-general to look for the possibilities. Then the vicar-general wrote a letter that it will take some time and that he will return to this point. And finally nothing happens. It seems to be the same procedure to delay and/or sabotage decisions as we experienced before.

At two locations in The Hague faithful have asked officially for the reintroduction of the traditional Latin Mass which has not been granted by the parish priests. While in the parish of St. Jacques Major in The Hague more than 50 faithful asked for the traditional Latin liturgy in their parish, despite two requests even directly to the bishop, the unwilling parish priests has not been corrected and another solution has not been arranged too. This is particularly frustrating because this group has priests, connected to that particular Church (Fraternity of St. John), available to celebrate the Holy Masses they have asked for.

In Rotterdam recently on request of some faithful one of the parish priests has started to introduce the Fraternity St. Peter with the traditional Latin liturgy in his parish very carefully and he is learning that liturgy nowadays.

No special activity has been organised by the Bishop to support the implementation of the *motu proprio*; no information, no explanation of the use of the traditional Latin liturgy, no liturgical formation and even no trial to reach faithful as well as priests with a positive sound about the traditional Latin liturgy.

It is known that some priests in this diocese have a positive attitude to the traditional Latin liturgy but they are afraid that the bishop's policy to fuse parishes, by which these priests have to co-operate in teams together with the modernist priests and so-called pastoral co-workers, will demolish the orthodox orientations of their parishes. They are afraid that this proces will be fasten to their parish especially if they start with the traditional Latin liturgy and by that they wait for the retirement of the Bishop of Rotterdam in August 2010.

Diocese of Groningen-Leeuwarden:

At the beginning of 2008 Mgr De Korte succeeded Mgr Eijk who had become Archbishop of Utrecht some month earlier. While there is a need for a Holy Mass according the Extraordinary form in this diocese the bishop has not granted anything. Therefore, some young faithful are travelling regularly three hours from Groningen to Amsterdam for the traditional Latin Mass and three hours to return, mostly once a month.

No initiative has been undertaken by the bishop, as well as his predecessor, to solve and to reconcile faithful attending an illegal organized Holy Mass according the traditional form. Due to the policy of the former Bishop of Groningen-Leeuwarden and current Archbishop of Utrecht, Mgr Eijk and his right hand, the president of the Dutch Latin Liturgy

Society, this Mass is nowadays in hands of a retired priest who has denied the validity of the liturgical books of 1969. Although they asked in the past on several occasions for a meeting, Mgr Eijk has always refused to speak with these faithful. As is the case with many traditionalists, they have, of course, to be punished without any mercy and without reconciliation, because they asked a priest of the SSPX to celebrate Holy Mass in their church in Zwartemeer. This is a little church closed for divine worship by the bishop, but which is owned by this group and for which they asked for the status of a chapel. Mgr. De Korte was not very complimentary about the Holy Father's decision to lift the excommunications of the Bishops of the Society St. Pius X. During a television interview of the nominatim Catholic Broadcasting Corporation he was very negative about the lifting of the excommunications of the four bishops and called the SSPX , "a highly distateful group". Mgr de Korte himself is not wiling to celebrate in Latin, even the Missal of 1969. Nothing has been done to support the implementation of the motu proprio; no information, no explanation of the use of the traditional Latin liturgy, not even a trial to reach the faithful as well the priests, and no liturgical formation.

Diocese of Breda:

Mgr Van de Hende, despite continuing the traditional Latin Mass in Flushing has taken no initiatives for a group of faithful in Breda, by granting them a place for the traditional Latin Mass in their area. There is a total lack of initiatives to implement the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*. There is no support, no information, and no explanation of the use of the traditional liturgy. Nothing has been done to reach out to the faithful as well the priests, and there has been no liturgical formation.

Diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch:

Mgr. Hurkmans did not undertake any action to implement the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*. Notwithstanding the individual initiatives of some parish priests and seminarians, the subject of the traditional Latin liturgy has been ignored totally by the bishop and his staff. Nothing has been done to support the implementation of the motu proprio; there has been no information, no explanation of the use of the traditional Latin liturgy, no trials to reach the faithful as well the priests, and no liturgical formation.

Diocese of Roermond:

Mgr Wiertz has not undertaken any action to implement the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum*. Besides the individual initiatives of some parish priests there is a total ignoring of the traditional liturgy by the bishop and his staff. No support of the implementation, no information, no explanation of the use of the traditional Latin liturgy, even no trial to reach the faithful as well the priests, no liturgical forming etc. In November 2008 there was an incident about a chapel in Kerkrade, just a few hundred metres on the Dutch side of the border that was bought by the German province of the SSPX. The bishop formally forbade the faithful to go to the traditional Latin liturgy in that chapel but did not organise any alternative.