

ANSWERING THE VALIDITY QUESTION

A Response to the Allegation that the Novus Ordo Missae is Invalid

by

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Preface

Today, the Catholic Church is being attacked from all sides. Unfortunately, much of the attack comes from those within her own walls. Not content to accept the Church's disciplines and teachings as we entered the mid-20th century, many Catholics going by the name "traditionalist," have rejected a whole host of papal and conciliar enactments, in particular, Vatican Council II and the Novus Ordo Missae. Dealing with the latter issue, Mr. Michael Duddy has done a tremendous work in this present essay in putting to rest the allegations that the Novus Ordo Mass is invalid. Mr. Duddy, having an academic background in Latin and philosophy, is very familiar with several of the major authors and arguments related to this and many other subjects. Mr. Duddy's main target in this essay is Patrick Henry Omlor's book, *The Robber Church*, which was one of the more detailed works in the twentieth century that claimed the Novus Ordo Mass of Pope Paul VI was invalid due to the change in the wording of the consecration formula. Mr. Duddy shows, by a meticulous and comprehensive study of Scripture, Tradition, the Council of Trent and its Catechism under Pius V, that Omlor's allegations are erroneous. I congratulate Mr. Duddy on this fine and indispensable essay, and I offer it on our website to all our CAI patrons, and for all others who have been troubled by this question.

Robert A. Sungenis, Ph.D.
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INTRODUCTION

On October 22, 1967, when the all-vernacular Canon of the Mass was officially promulgated throughout the English-speaking sector of the Latin Rite, no objection to it was more indicting than that contained in the monograph *Questioning the Validity of the Masses using the New All-English Canon* by Patrick Henry Omlor. (Herein after referred to as QVM.) Throughout the years, from 1968 to 1997, addendums and updates have been added in the form of newsletters (*Interdum*) and pamphlets. All of these have been put together in a book- form entitled *The Robber Church*.

Beginning with the observation that the sacramental form used in the consecration of the wine had been changed from "*which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins.*" into "*it will be shed for all men so that sins may be forgiven.*" Mr. Omlor, after formulating what may first appear to constitute *prima facie* evidence for theologically plausible and logically-deduced

arguments, concludes with the “opinion” that “Masses” using this new altered form of consecration are “most probably invalid.”

In formulating his thesis, Mr. Omlor uses these premises:

- That the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas support the theological position that the entire form for the consecration of the wine (as opposed to simply “This is My Blood.”) is necessary for validity.
- That the authority of the Catechism of the Council of Trent officially confirms the position of St. Thomas.
- That the Bull *Apostolicae Curae* of Pope Leo XIII in which Anglican Orders were infallibly declared to be “*absolutely null and utterly void*” constitutes a corresponding analogy, according to which the present change in the form for the Eucharist exactly parallels in principle the change brought about by the Anglicans in the form for Holy Orders.
- That the translation which renders “*for many*” as “*for all*” and “*unto the remission of sins*” as “*so that sins may be forgiven*” constitutes “*a sacrilegious mutilation of Our Lord’s very own words*”. As a result, even if the Mass were valid, it would now become what Daniel the Prophet called, “*an abomination of desolation in the holy place,*” and in the minds of some, even a “*damnable heresy*” in the very heart of the Mass.

Almost 38 years have passed since QVM was first written and its progressive influence upon traditionally minded Catholics of all persuasions has not been without significant consequences. The immediate one is the widespread impairment that such a conviction necessarily inflicts upon the conscience, the abrogation of one’s spiritual tranquility, and, in the practical order, the reduction in the sacramental life for many of its adherents, because access to “valid masses” and the availability of churches where Our Lord is still eucharistically present are, as a necessary result of this hypothesis, reduced to a mere smattering.

Secondly, aside from the fact that the *status quaestionis* posed by Omlor has now evolved from simply that of a “question” to that of an outright *declaration* of “absolute certitude,” it is now also claimed by many people, following the principles laid out in QVM, that the newly revised rites of many of the other sacraments are likewise invalid. Of capital importance are the sacramental rites of Holy Orders and Episcopal Consecration, for the invalidity of these rites necessarily invalidates all future sacraments conferred by these ministers, with the possible exceptions of Baptism and Matrimony.

But the ultimate consequence of this genre of unbridled theologizing has been both the genesis and the proliferation of multi-faceted and multi-sectarian Sedevacantist groups. While all of these groups have repudiated most, if not all, the popes and bishops of the existential Catholic Church since Vatican II, many have either *elected* or have accepted a *mystically appointed* pope, and have in practice, if not in fact, excommunicated any outside their ranks, including other Sedevacantists who are not in magisterial union with themselves.

Others, more radical still, have rejected all priests and sacraments (even those offered by the Sedevacantists) and no longer avail themselves of any masses or sacraments, content merely

to stay at home and say prayers, thus reducing their objective spiritual condition to that of the sincere protestant, who only has Baptism, Marriage, and personal devotion.

The “invalidity” mentality invariably leads to the “Sedevacantist” mentality, and the “Sedevacantist” mentality ultimately leads logically to, if not the *objective* state of *formal* schism, at least to a state that would *objectively appear* to be that of *material* schism.

I am writing this series of articles because 38 years ago, I too once adhered to the invalidity and the Sedevacantist mindset. In early 1969, while a seminarian at St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo, CA, I received a copy of QVM. Having read it over and over many times, I became mentally saturated with all its elements, and as a result, ultimately became convinced of its conclusion: the new Mass was definitely invalid and to attend it would be a mortal sin. The Sedevacantist mindset soon logically followed; after all, how can a true pope promulgate an invalid mass, the consequences of which would constitute idolatry—worshipping mere bread.

Having left the seminary, I soon became friends with Pat Omlor and spent much time discussing the validity thesis with him, in order to perfect its arguments and to rebut its critics. But in 1971 something providential happened. Having already begun to sense a certain problem with one aspect of the thesis, namely the *res sacramenti* issue (article #3), I fortuitously came upon a statement by the great American theologian, Fr. Emmanuel Doronzo OMI, which jolted my former self-assuredness.

To paraphrase Doronzo: Before the time of the Council of Trent, the vast majority of theologians followed St. Thomas in denying that only the words “This is My Blood” suffice for the validity of the wine. However, after the time of the Council that position shifted dramatically, and today virtually no one follows this position.

What? After the Council of Trent, theologians *en masse* abandoned Thomas on this issue? What caused such a shift? After all, the Council of Trent consulted Thomas’s works as the authority second only to Scripture itself. It would be a year before I discovered the answer to the Trent-Aquinas conundrum, and it was that discovery which will constitute the subject matter of the second article.

- In article one, I will discuss the position of St. Thomas Aquinas regarding the consecration of the wine.
- In article two, I will deal with the Catechism of the Council of Trent and its treatment of the words of consecration of the wine, to see if it confirms, as alleged by Omlor, the position of St. Thomas Aquinas.
- In article three, I will deal with the papal bull *Apostolicae Curae* as it relates, as again alleged by Omlor, to the doctrine of the *res sacramenti*, and how it pertains to the words of consecration.
- Lastly, in article four, I will deal with the allegation that “for all men” constitutes a *bogus translation* of the words of consecration.

My hope is that by showing the errors of Mr. Omlor’s position, traditional Catholics will unite and fight for tradition for the *right reasons*, armed with the *right arguments* and to fight the *real enemies* of the Church instead of each other.

PART I
(Article #1 & #2)

ARTICLE # 1

**The Authority of St. Thomas Aquinas & the Form
For the Consecration of the Wine**

Although there have been several theologians who have argued about whether or not St. Thomas always held that the short form, i.e. “This is My Blood”, was insufficient for the consecration of the wine, I, for my part, concede that the Angelic Doctor ultimately opted for that position. I also concede that the majority of theologians during the time of Thomas followed him in this regard, although his mentor, St. Albert the Great, and his contemporary, St. Bonaventure, both disagreed with him.

Certain later Thomists, notably the eminent Dominican, Cardinal Tommaso Cajetan, were somewhat disconcerted by their master’s position on this matter, and thus sought to explain it away by denying that Thomas really meant what he apparently wrote. It is my conjecture that Cajetan was probably as perplexed as I am, in wondering why Thomas would hold such an opinion regarding the necessity of these additional words, because such a requirement is inescapably at odds with his more important theology regarding the nature of the *res et sacramentum* as the sole determinant of a sacrament’s essence. (Article #3.)

Cajetan sought to explain that Thomas’s expression “these (additional) words pertain to the *substance* of the form” really only meant “these (additional) words pertain to the *integrity* of, not the very *essence* of the form.” Cajetan therefore dichotomized Thomas’s meaning of the word *substance*, thus giving it a secondary meaning of *integrity* as opposed to *essence*. But Pope St. Pius V ordered this explanation to be deleted from Cajetan’s *Commentary on the Summa*. Omlor concluded from this action of the pope that St. Pius V did so in order to refute Cajetan’s position that these additional words were not necessary for validity.

But another explanation is at least equally possible, namely, that the pope didn’t like Cajetan’s dichotomizing of Thomas’s usage of the word *substance*, especially in the context of sacramental theology. As we will see in the next article, Pope Pius V hardly disagreed with the Cardinal on the issue of the sufficiency of the short form.

The bottom line then in this matter of St. Thomas’s position regarding the “*long form*” vs. the “*short form*” is that, if all we had to go on were the theological disputations of theologian vs. theologian, doctor vs. doctor, saint vs. saint, we could then determine absolutely *nothing of certitude* in this matter. Needless to say, theologians, saints, and Doctors of the Church are not the magisterium, but simply *aids* to the magisterium.

Therefore, we conclude this article on St. Thomas by simply saying that, regardless of what St. Thomas held, the matter was ultimately, *authoritatively* settled by an authority higher than Thomas.

ARTICLE #2

The Catechism of Trent and the Valid Form for the Consecration of the Wine

While it is, objectively speaking, perplexing to *me* that Mr. Omlor would solicit the support of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* in order to substantiate his position that the words “This is My Blood” do *not* suffice for the valid consecration of the wine, I can readily understand why he and so many other traditionalists have come to believe that the catechism supports his thesis. A preemptory reading, influenced by the foreknowledge of St. Thomas’ opinion in this matter, and coupled with a poorly translated and insufficiently subtitled English text, could understandably lead one to such a faulty, initial impression. Nevertheless, I say “truly perplexing” because what the Catechism *actually* says is *diametrically opposed* to what he *alleges* it says.

In his periodic newsletter, *Interdum*, entitled *Five Flaws Found*, Omlor set out to refute several statements written by Fr. Cletus Healy, S.J. concerning this matter of the invalidity question. The first of Fr. Healy’s arguments against Omlor’s position was his allegation that the Catechism actually taught that, contrary to St. Thomas, only the words “This is My Blood” are essential to the consecration of the wine. But against this allegation of Fr. Healy, Omlor wrote:

Lately several Interdum readers have inquired about a certain sentence in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, which sentence *appears* to them to support the argument that the truncated ‘form’, viz., “This is the Chalice of My Blood”, is sufficient. Moreover, Fr. Cletus Healy, S.J., a staunch advocate of this truncated form theory, in a recent article (*Twin Circle*, Aug. 23, 1970) quoted this particular sentence from the *Catechism* – twice in this article he quoted it – to support his arguments. Thus it behooves us to take notice of this key sentence, to investigate it, and to ascertain whether or not the authors of this catechism meant what Fr. Healy believes they meant.

“The Catechism notes,” writes Fr. Healy, as he cites this sentence, “that ‘THE FORM TO BE USED (IN THE CONSECRATION) OF THIS ELEMENT (THE WINE) EVIDENTLY CONSISTS OF THOSE WORDS WHICH SIGNIFY THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF THE WINE IS CHANGED INTO THE BLOOD OF OUR LORD.’ But the words of consecration, ‘This is the chalice of My Blood,’ and these words alone, clearly ‘signify that the substance of the wine is changed into the blood of our Lord.’ Therefore, these words (or their equivalent), and these alone should be recognized as sufficient for consecration.” Thus Father Healy: however, I added emphasis above to this “key sentence” from the *Roman Catechism*, which, by the way, Fr. Healy has quoted from the version translated by John A. McHugh, O.P. and Charles J. Callan, O.P.”

Omlor goes on to comment:

This sentence, as rendered above, standing alone out of its context, could appear at first glance to have the meaning attributed to it by Fr. Healy. However (a) first, the above translation is not faithful to the Latin text for this sentence, and (b) the

context of this sentence in the Catechism categorically rules out Father Healy's interpretation of it.

In defense of his position, however, Omlor was able to demonstrate that Fr. Healy's argument in this regard was indeed predicated in part upon a somewhat faulty translation of the Latin original. After citing Fr. Healy's quotation of the McHugh and Callan translation of the Catechism, Omlor went on to say:

If, instead of grasping at straws, they would take a close scholarly look at this particular sentence, our opponents would realize right away that something about it (as quoted above) is surely haywire. Immediately evident, without even consulting the Latin text, are two clues which reveal that the above 'translation' simply cannot be correct.

Here Omlor has throw down the gauntlet to Fr. Healy: Either follow the demands of true scholarship and proper textual exegesis or withdraw from this controversy. I could not agree more. Thus it certainly does behoove us "to take notice of this key sentence, to investigate it, and to ascertain whether or not the authors of this catechism meant what Fr. Healy believes they meant." We will certainly endeavor to "take a close scholarly look at this sentence" and "rather than grasp at straws," I believe we shall clearly see that it is indeed Fr. Healy who is right.

Flaw # 1: The Two Clues

The First Clue

The "first clue" here refers to the opening words of the above emphasized text: "the form to be used." Omlor is totally correct, for the Latin text makes no mention whatsoever of a "form to be used" but simply uses the words "the form."

The Second Clue

The second clue...is that if their interpretation of it be correct, then the Catechism has contradicted itself outrageously. At the very outset...the Catechism most emphatically asserted that 'we must FIRMLY BELIEVE' that the form 'consists of' the following words; FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD ETC...' How, then is it possible that this very same catechism, just a few lines later in the 'key sentence' under discussion, could say or even imply that the form 'EVIDENTLY consists of' something less than the entire form which, initially, it vigorously demanded 'we must firmly believe' that it 'consists of'?

If, as Omlor says, the Catechism did indeed assert that the form "consists of the following words," then it would be true that the Catechism would have indeed "contradicted itself outrageously," if it also asserted that the form only "EVIDENTLY consists of" only those words which signified transubstantiation; for it is certain that "the following words," taken as a composite unit, signify more than just transubstantiation.

But Omlor, too, in his rebuttal to Fr. Healy, has ALSO relied upon a faulty translation of the Catechism. The Latin text of the sentence in question reads as follows:

“Eam igitur his verbis comprehendi, certo credendum est:
HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI , NOVI ET AETERNI TESTAMENT,
MYSTERIUM FIDEI, QUI PRO VOBIS , ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN
REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.

[Therefore we must certainly believe that it consists of the following words:
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND
EVERLASTING COVENANT, THE MYSTERY OF FAITH, WHICH SHALL BE
SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS.]

We will assume for the time being that the catechism actually says what Omlor says it says as it is expressed by him in the following quotation: “We must certainly believe that the form consists of the following words”. In this statement there are 2 preliminary issues that must be addressed.

The First Issue

The first issue to be addressed is the question: In what sense is the word “form” being used by the Catechism? Is the Catechism, at this point, using the word ‘form’ in the *narrow* sense of “the essential form” or in the *wider* sense of the “legally required form,” i.e., a form which the legislator has required the Latin Rite to use, but a form which nevertheless *might* be composed of *both essential and non-essential elements*?

Now if the latter sense be the case, i.e. “we must certainly believe that the legally required form consists of the following words, then Omlor’s assertion that “the form consists of the following words” will prove nothing concerning the issue of whether long form vs. short form is necessary for validity.

But if, on the other hand, the former sense be the case, i.e. “we must certainly believe that the essential form “*consists of* the following words”, then Omlor *still* has only proven that perhaps, maybe all of following words are essential. I say this because once Omlor himself (in Flaw # 4) denies in his argument with Fr. Healy that not every word in the cited text is absolutely essential. Thus the statement even as it stands translated here as “*consists of*” is still *sufficiently ambiguous* and therefore without *further clarification* by the Catechism is intrinsically incapable of determining that every single word in the cited text is absolutely essential, let alone which of those words *are* and which are not essential.

For example, at the very least, Omlor points out that the word “For” is not necessary. When comparing the Latin Rite form with those forms used by the various Eastern Rites, he eliminates other words and phrases as well. The phrase “*chalice of My Blood*,” is often replaced by “My Blood; “eternal” is omitted from “the new and eternal covenant”; “mystery of faith” is simply omitted in all but two Catholic Rites; “for you” is often omitted and so is “unto the remission of sins.”

In the *Latin* text for the form for the wine there are a total of 22 words. After eliminating all of the above words admitted by Omlor to be *non- essential*, we are left with a total of 9

possible *essential* words. That is already a 59% reduction in the scope of the meaning of the phrase “*consists of*.” (This is My Blood of the new covenant shed for many.) Is the phrase “consists of” therefore sufficiently ambiguous? You decide.

That having been said, we can now return to the consideration of the first issue. There is no doubt that the Catechism is here, in this place, using the word “form” in the narrow sense, for the context makes it clear that it is setting out to prove what the *essential* form actually is. Therefore, thus far, we will side with Omlor and say that the meaning of the expression is “we must believe with certitude that the essential form consists of the following words.” Later on, after proving what that essential form is, the Catechism will shift to a consideration of the legally required form when it continues on to explain the meaning of the remainder words that are not necessary for validity.

The Second Issue

But now we get to the crux of the matter. The second issue to be addressed revolves around the issue Omlor initially raised against Fr. Healey, namely the Latin text of the Catechism versus the somewhat inaccurate McHugh & Callan English translation. This second issue then constitutes the \$64,000 question – does the translation “the form consists of the following words” conform to the Latin “Eam, igitur, comprehendi his verbis?” Let us examine this underscored phrase thoroughly and see if it passes the requirements inherent in Omlor’s challenge to Fr. Healy.

The Exegesis of “Comprehendi his verbis”

First of all, technically speaking, the Latin text doesn’t expressly say “the following words” but rather simply says “these words”. It is true that the word “following” is *implied* because a series of words is actually added following the expression “these words”; but it is not formally expressed. (A minor detail indeed, but I am playing by the strict code of textual scholarship that Omlor has placed upon Fr. Healy.)

Secondly, and most importantly, the phrase “comprehendi his verbis” cannot be literally translated as “consists of these words.” A preliminary point that must be made here is that I don’t know where Omlor came up with the translation of “consists OF” as neither the Mc Hugh & Callan nor the Donovan rendition says “consists OF.” Both say “consists IN.” This will allow for an even greater amplitude of ambiguity than the already sufficiently ambiguous phrase “consists OF.” As a result, Omlor is starting off with an inaccurate rendering of an already inaccurate translation.

Let us again return to the entire Latin sentence under consideration: “Certo credendum est eam, igitur, comprehendi his verbis: Hic est Calix Sanguinis mei, ETC.” The clause “eam igitur comprehendi his verbis” is an Indirect Discourse construction and follows the statement “Certo credendum est” as the object of “what is to be believed.” In an indirect discourse construction the subject (eam) (it, the form) is placed in the Accusative case, the verb (comprehendi) is placed in the infinitive form, and the adverbial prepositional phrase (his verbis) is in the Ablative case. So then, *what* must be believed with certainty? That it (the essential form) *consists of* these words? No! That it (the essential form) consists in these words? No, again. What must be believed with certainty is what the expression “comprehendi his verbis” *literally* says. So what then does it really, literally say?

The Verb “Comprehendere”

Like most words in any language, more than one definition is almost always possible. To arrive at the intended meaning of any given word at least two things are necessary. The first is to compose a list of all the possible meanings that could be even remotely possible in the subject matter being discussed. The second is context.

Finally, in the case of a verb, it may often be necessary to consider how the verb is parsed in order to help rule out the likelihood of one possible meaning versus another. In parsing the verb “comprehendere” in the text of the Catechism we find that:

The translation rendered as “consists” by both McHugh & Callan and Donovan is rendered *by them* in the Present Tense, Active Voice, but the Latin verb form “comprehendi” is the Present Tense, Passive Voice. Now *if* “consist” be the intended meaning here, it should have to be rendered into English as “the form is consisted,” not as “the form consists.”

Also, the translation rendered by Omlor as “of these words” does not correctly reflect the Latin phrase “his verbis” which is the Ablative case (not the Genitive) and would have to be rendered either as “with these words” or “by means of these words” (Ablative of Means) or as “in these words” or “with respect to these words” (Ablative of Respect or Specification). (If the Latin wished to have said “of these words” it could have employed the Genitive case for the prepositional phrase “ of these words” or the Accusative case by making the preposition part of the verb, and the phrase “these words” as a direct object.) Thus, if “comprehendere” = “consists” as the intended translation, then the overall literal translation must read “the form is consisted *with* these words” (ablative of means), - a very awkward and grammatically incorrect expression, or “the form is consisted *in* these words” (ablative of respect), - another very awkward and incorrect expression.

That having been said, let us now investigate all the potential meanings of the verb “comprehendere” as listed in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. The first thing we notice is that the meaning “consist” isn’t even mentioned. This is not to say that “comprehendere” can never be used as a synonym for “to consist,” but the verbs normally used to indicate “consist” are usually “componere” or “consistere.”

Of the 11 categories of possible meanings, numbers 4, 6, 7, 9, & 10 are potentially applicable here. Thus we have 5 potential categories of meaning:

- Category A, #4: to join together, unite.
- Category B, #6: to find, to come upon; to find, to come upon (as in a *particular place* or circumstance); to discover, to detect.
- Category C, #7: to enclose; to include; to surround; to embrace (in the scope of an activity, etc.); to include (in a class or group).
- Category D, #9: to cover; to deal with; to provide for; to deal with, provide for (in law).
- Category E, # 10: to express (in words or writing).

Recalling that the verb “comprehendere” is expressed in the Passive Voice and remembering that it is annexed with the Ablative Case as either an Ablative of Means or as an Ablative of Specification, we can now apply each of the above possible definitions together with each of the two possible usages here of the Ablative case in order to find out what “we must believe with certainty” about all the “following words”, i.e. the entire long form cited by the Catechism:

Category A, # 4:

- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is joined together with, is united with these (following) words.

Category B, # 6:

- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is found with respect to these (following) words.
- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is discovered in, is detected in these (following) words.

Category C, # 7:

- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is included in, is included with, is enclosed in, is enclosed by means of these (following) words.
- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is surrounded by, is embraced by means of these (following) words.
- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is included in the class or group of these (following) words.

Category D, # 9:

- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is covered, is dealt with, is provided for, is legally provided for, by means of or with respect to these (following) words.

Category E, # 10:

- We must certainly believe that the (essential) form is expressed by means of, with respect to these (following) words.

As can be plainly seen, each of these translations is at least equally possible as the Mc Hugh & Callan rendition of “consists IN” these (following) words. At the very least, as we already mentioned above, they render the statement ambiguous. As we continue to proceed further, we will discover decisively that any one of the above translations could be and is the true one. However, before doing this, we will enumerate all the preliminary and supporting reasons why “is united with, is found in, is included in, is contained in, is discovered in, is surrounded by, is covered in, is expressed with respect to, etc” is immeasurably more probable than “consists of” or even “consists in.”

Reasons Against “Consists of” as a Viable Translation

The connotation of “included in, etc. is verified by the use in Latin of the *Passive* rather than the *Active* Voice. If “consist” were intended, it would have been far more sensible to use the *Active* Voice. Thus: “The form (eam) consists (comprehendere) of these words (horum verborum)” vs. “The form (eam) is consisted (comprehen*di*) of these words (his verbis).”

When describing what must be considered the necessary form for the consecration of the bread, these same authors used the following *unambiguous* construction:

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Docemur illam <u>esse</u> formam: HOC EST CORPUS MEUM.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sequitur</i> formam in iis ipsis verbis <u>constituendam esse.</u></p> | <p style="text-align: center;">We are taught that this <u>is</u> the form: THIS IS MY BODY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>It follows</i> that the form <u>must be</u> <u>constituted</u> in these very same words.</p> |
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Here there can be no doubt that ALL of the foregoing words are essential to the form. In stating categorically that “this IS the form” the authors deliberately eliminated ANY non-essential words. They excluded “enim” (for), and the scriptural clause “which shall be given up for you.” They even went out of their way to positively state that the words “Take & eat” and the conjunction “for” were not necessary for validity. They then drew an emphatic conclusion from the form words they just cited: It follows that the form must be constituted in these very same words.

Why didn’t these authors then just use a parallel construction for the wine similar to the one just used for the bread? For example:

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| <p style="text-align: center;">Docemur illam <u>esse</u> formam: HIC EST ENIM CALIX SANGUINIS MEI, NOVI ET AETERNI TESTAMENT, MYSTERIUM FIDEI, QUI PRO VOBIS , ET PRO MULTIS EFFUNDETUR IN REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">We are taught that this <u>is</u> the form: FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT THE MYSTERY OF FAITH WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.</p> |
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Had these authors wished to express the idea that the sacramental form absolutely consisted of the following words they could have used either the verb “componere” or “consistere”, or perhaps even “comprehendere,” but used in the *Active* Voice and followed either by the Genitive or by the Accusative Case. And to remove absolutely all possibility of

misunderstanding they could simply have said the form “is expressed in *ALL* of these words *EXCEPT* for the word “enim.”

But the most decisive indication that the phrase *comprendi his verbis* can't possible have the meaning of ‘consists of all these words’ is the expression “Certo credendum est,” “we must believe with certitude.” But if we are to “*believe*” with the certitude of “faith” that all or even some of the additional words be necessary for validity, then why didn't the Catechism just cite the definition that said so? It didn't, because there is no such dogmatic definition. But, on the other hand “we must certainly believe” with *divine faith* that the essential form is actually included in those very words which the Latin Church has been *legally required* to use. Otherwise, instead of just questioning the validity of the New Mass, we would have to declare the invalidity of every Mass the Latin Church has ever used. This of course would be heretically absurd.

Another point along this same line of thinking would be the following dilemma; to assert that “we must believe” *de fide* the entire form to be essential, is to go beyond what the Church herself has allowed for over 450 years since the Catechism was issued. How, if “we must believe,” can we ever reconcile the fact that the Church (almost 40 popes) has allowed such a large number of her theologians, including even doctors of the church such as St. Robert Bellarmine and St. Alphonsus Ligouri, to openly doubt and publicly contradict it? If such were the case, the only thing “we must believe” is that the Magisterium has utterly failed.

Flaw #2: Restrictive vs. Non-Restrictive Clause

The second flaw in his interpretation of the Catechism is expressed in the following quotation, again from Interdum #5. Quoting Omlor, he writes:

The Latin text of this disputed sentence is as follows:

‘Constat enim, iis verbis, quae vini substantiam in sanguinem Domini converti significant, hujus elementi formam contineri.’

One need know no Latin whatsoever merely to see with the eyes that the adjective clause, ‘*quae vini...significant,*’ is separated by commas from the rest of the sentence; and this point is vital...Now compare these two versions:

“The form... evidently consists of those words which signify...blood of our Lord.” (McHugh and Callan translation quoted by Fr. Healy.)

‘For evidently in those words, which signify...blood of our Lord, the form of this element consists.’ (Correct and literal translation.)

Quite a difference, isn't there, between saying ‘those words, (pause) which signify’ and ‘those word which signify?’ When an adjective clause merely adds to the meaning of a noun or pronoun and is essential to the meaning of the sentence, it is called a restrictive or essential clause. An essential clause is not set apart from the rest of the sentence by any mark of punctuation. (Examples follow).

If an adjectival clause merely adds to the meaning of a sentence but doesn't restrictively modify a noun or a pronoun, it is called a non-restrictive or nonessential clause. Non-essential clauses are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas. (Examples follow).

In our sentence under discussion the clause, 'which signify that the substance of wine is converted into the blood of our Lord,' is clearly nonessential.

Now it is an error of major proportions, when dealing with the grammatical construction of the Latin language, to assume, as Omlor does, that just because a certain clause is set off by commas, it is thereby constituted ipso facto, a non-restrictive or non-essential clause. First of all, punctuation marks such as commas are frequently employed in Latin to simply indicate stylistic versification or metric symmetry. Also, unlike English with its more exacting rules for structuring sentence *word order* and punctuation, Latin, in order to enhance clarity of meaning, allows the writer the flexibility of placing key clauses, not only before or after, but even within the word framework of another clause or phrase. Whenever, in order to achieve this greater precision of expression, the writer does insert a particular clause within the framework of another, he will often set off the interfaced clause by commas, and in so doing he will definitely not have relegated it to the syntax of something nonessential or nonrestrictive. Bearing this in mind, let us now proceed to re-examine the Latin text of this disputed sentence.

“Constat enim, iis verbis, quae vini substantiam in sanguinem Domini converti significant, hujus elementi formam contineri.”

The following is the literal translation of the above Latin text in the exact word order including its use of the commas.

“For it is evident that, in those words, which signify the substance of the wine to be converted into the blood of the Lord, the form of this element is contained.”

First of all, we should again take notice of the fact that the basic structure of the sentence in the Latin is also that of indirect discourse. Thus, the series of words *formam*, (the form), *contineri*, (is contained), and *iis verbis* (in those words), constitutes, respectively, the *subject*, the *verb*, and the *adverbial prepositional phrase* of the indirect discourse construction. This indirect discourse construction follows and is the immediate object of the sentence “For it is evident that....”

Now the point is this: if the actual word sequence of the original Latin were to slavishly follow that which is *logically dictated* by the *case endings*, (the *individual word syntaxes*), then the Latin and the English sentence structures would have to be read as follows: I will place a number after each word as it appears in the official Latin text in order to indicate the word order according to the syntax logically and therefore essentially prescribed by the case endings. The original Latin format is as follows:

“Constat (2) enim (1), iis verbis (6), quae (7) vini (10) substantiam (9) in sanguinem Domini (12) converti (11) significant (8), hujus element i(4) formam (3) contineri (5)”

By rearranging the Latin text in accordance with the number sequence above, we would arrive at the following logical, syntactical format:

“Enim (1) constat (2) formam (3) hujus elementi (4) contineri (5) in iis verbis (6) quae (7) significant (8) substantiam (9) vini (10) converti (11) in sanguinem Domini (12).”

The translation would then read:

“For (1) it is evident that (2) the form (3) of this element (4) is contained (5) in those words (6) which (7) signify that (8) the substance (9) of wine (10) is converted (11) into the blood of the Lord (12).”

This rendition follows the order *dictated by the rules of case syntax* and therefore represents the only possible *grammatical, logical, and therefore essential* way in which this sentence can be understood. The sentence structure of the original Latin chose to follow a word order based primarily on an *arbitrary* sequence of *style* and *versification* rather than one based on the *syntax* of case endings.

To clarify the point, a Latin author could compose a sentence by following only the word order dictated by syntax. He could then cut up the words, throw them up into the air and let them fall down where they may. The reader would still be able, in most cases, to put them back together again according to the original meaning the author intended. Try that in English, please!

With this in mind let us now review what Omlor said: “In our sentence under discussion the clause, ‘which signify that the substance of wine is converted into the blood of our Lord,’ is clearly nonessential.” Seen now in this light, it becomes immediately evident that the *quae significant* (*which signify*) clause really is essential or restrictive after all. But the commas, in addition to being used merely for style and versification, may also have been used for another purpose. It is exceedingly probable that the Latin authors, in accordance with the principle we just mentioned about placing key clauses within the verbal framework of another phrase, chose to arrange the sequence of the *quae* clause so that it might be more appositely placed, that is, placed in apposition simultaneously with both the word “*verbis*” and the word “(essential) *formam*” rather than merely placed after the word “verbis” to which the *quae* of the *quae significant* clause grammatically refers.

In so doing, the authors of the Catechism would have made it manifestly clear that they wished to align the “*quae*” clause not only with the term *verbis*¹ (*to which the quae grammatically refers back to*), but also with the word formam as well, since in this case the word formam has the connotation of meaning “the essential form”. If, therefore, the *quae* clause also has a reference to the word formam, it immediately becomes evident that the *quae* clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Thus the following:

“iis verbis = (quae significant substantiam vini converti in sanguinem Domini) = formam.”

¹ *verbis* is neuter plural and *quae* is neuter plural.

It is like a mathematical polynomial equation in which each of the three components are logically equivalent. Since both “*verbis*” and “*formam*” are grammatically equivalent to the entire *quae* clause, they are logically equivalent to each other. But the authors of the catechism didn’t end the extent of their proof simply by saying what we have demonstrated so far, namely:

- We must certainly believe that the essential form is included in these following words.
- It is evident that the essential form is contained in those words which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the blood of the Lord.

They actually took it *two steps* further, just in case somebody might possibly still miss their point. When the Catechism was completed and sent to the Pope for approval, it was returned to them with the instruction to provide more *headings* and *sub-headings* in order to make its contents more clearly categorized and easily understood. Unfortunately, many of the vernacular renditions of the catechism were less compliant than the Latin Typical Edition. Neither the Mc Hugh & Callan nor the Donovan English editions followed the Latin sub-headings in the matter here to be discussed, thus rendering the point to be made somewhat *less easily* observable.

Before making this final point, the virtual “*coup d’ grace*” to the QVM doctrine, I wish to cite a decree from the *Council of Trent*, a decree which was published in bold-face print in the very front of the Latin Editions of the Catechism. Because the Council did not have sufficient time to officially discuss and perhaps to define the essential matter and form for the seven sacraments, it ordered that a committee of theologians would be set up after the council to do so and the results of their determinations would be officially published in the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*.

Although the catechism’s explanations do not constitute an infallible definition on this matter, they nevertheless constitute the most authoritative declaration given to date, a declaration which has stood the test of time for almost 450 years, and thus must be the Church’s official position on the matter.

Council of Trent: Session 24, Session 7. *De Reformatione*:

That the faithful may approach the sacraments with greater reverence and devotion of mind...the holy council commands all bishops...to explain their *efficacy* and use... *in accordance with the form* which will be prescribed for each of the sacraments by the holy Council in the catechism...

Thus this decree gives a unique authority to *those statements* in the Catechism which go out of their way to prove and elucidate what the essential efficacy of a sacramental rite is. As we shall see, there can be little wonder why, after the time of the Council of Trent, the “overwhelmingly vast majority of theologians abandoned the opinion of St. Thomas that the long form was necessary for the valid consecration of the wine.”

Prior to discussing the “*efficacy and use*” of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the Catechism provided two headings, one for the form of the Eucharist according to the bread and one for the Eucharist according to the wine. The headings read as follows in the Latin text:

“*Formam eucharistiae, quoad panem, definitur et probatur*”
(The Form of the Eucharist, for the bread, is defined and proven)

“Formam eucharistiae, quoad vinum, definitur et probatur”
(The form of the eucharist, for the wine, is defined and proven)

After saying that the form “*is proven*”, it proceeds to give 3 more sub-headings as to how it will prove what the essential form is. The three proofs are (1) from Scripture, (2) from Tradition, and (3) from Reason. Thus we have, in the Latin edition, the following format:

Formam eucharistiae, quoad panem, definitur et probatur
E Scriptura
E Traditione
Ratione

[The form of the eucharist, for the bread, is defined and proven
From Scripture
From Tradition
From Reason]

The exact same format is repeated for the form for the wine:

Formam eucharistiae, quoad vinum, definitur et probatur
E Scriptura
E Traditione
Ratione

[The form of the eucharist, for the wine, is defined and proven
From Scripture
From Tradition
From Reason]

Under the subtitle “Ratione” i.e. “From Reason” the catechism proceeds to prove why the form just cited under the “E Scriptura” section, - “This is My Body” - suffices for the validity of the consecration of the bread:

Ratione: “Sed ratione etiam id facile persuaderi potest: nam forma ea est, qua illud significatur quod in hoc sacramento efficitur; cum autem haec verba id quod fit significant ac declarent, hoc est, panis conversionem in verum Domini nostri Corpus, sequitur formam in illis ipsis verbis constituendam esse.”

[From Reason: “But from reason also it is able to be easily convinced: for the form is that by which what is signified is what is effected in this sacrament; however, since these words (“This is My Body”) signify and declare what it becomes, that is, the conversion of the bread into the true Body of our Lord (transubstantiation), it follows that the form MUST BE DETERMINED IN THESE VERY SAME WORDS.” (“This is My Body” my emphasis)].

It is interesting to note that the Catechism is actually laying its proof out in the form of an *enthymeme*, that is, in the form of an *indirect, conversational style, syllogism*. In effect it is saying:

Major Premise: (A): The form is that by which what is signified is what is affected.

Minor Premise: (B): These words signify & declare what it becomes.

Conclusion: (C): It follows the form must be determined in these very same words.

Again, under the subtitle “Ratione”, i.e. “From Reason”, the Catechism proceeds to prove why the form just cited under “E Scriptura” – (This is the chalice of My Blood, of the new and eternal covenant, the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you & for many unto the remission of sins) – in which it says the valid, necessary form is included in, is found in, is discovered in, is enclosed in, is covered in, is expressed in, will suffice for the valid consecration of the wine:

Ratione: “Verum de haec forma nemo dubitare poterit, si quod antea dictum est de forma consecrationis, quae ad panis elementum adhibetur; hoc etiam loco attendatur: Constat enim iis verbis quae vini substantiam in sanguinem Domini converti significant huius elementi formam contineri. Quare cum verba illa hoc aperte declarent perspicuum est aliam formam, constituendam non esse.”

From Reason: “No one will be able to truly doubt concerning this form if he attends in this place also to what was said before concerning the form of the consecration of the element of the bread: For it is evident that the form of this element is contained in those words which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the Blood of the Lord (transubstantiation). Since, therefore, these words openly declare this (transubstantiation) it is clear that NO OTHER FORM NEEDS TO BE DETERMINED.”

Again the Catechism lays out its proof “from reason” in the form of an enthymene which exactly corresponds to the enthymeme laid out in regards to the form for the bread.

Major Premise: (A): The form of this element is contained in those words which signify that the substance of the wine is converted into the Blood of the Lord. (transubstantiation)

Minor Premise: (B): Since these words openly declare this (transubstantiation)

Conclusion: (C): It is clear that no other form needs to be determined.

Notice that the catechism does two things here:

- 1) Under the subtitle “*Ratione*”, it instructs the reader to “attend in this place ALSO to what was said before concerning the form of the consecration for the element of the bread.” In other words: Go back and read under this same subtitle “*Ratione*” what we just said about the form for the *bread* and apply it here! Compare “*Ratione*” with “Ratione”!
- 2) The catechism provides a syllogistic comparison, a comparison that will reveal to you the following: A: (the bread) These words “This is My Body” signify what it becomes, i.e. they signify transubstantiation. Thus it follows that the form must be composed simply of these words and these words alone. B: (the wine) These words, the entire form quoted under the “E Scriptura” section, include the form “This is My Blood” which also signifies what the wine becomes, i.e. they too signify transubstantiation. Thus it follows that no other form needs to be determined – no other form is necessary for validity.

As a result, the *Catechism of Trent* positively avers that only those words which signify *transubstantiation* pertain to what is effected (the *efficacy*) in the sacrament of the Eucharist. It avers it twice: once for the *bread* and once again for the wine. But just so you don’t miss the point, it tells you to *go back and read* the section concerning the *bread* and *apply what you read there* to what you are going to read here concerning the wine. But just in case you don’t understand *where* we are telling you to go back to, just follow the *subtitle roadmap – Ratione vs. Ratione*. There it lays it out for you sylllogism by syllogism. In case you still don’t get it, it repeats itself categorically when it ends by saying: (bread) “It follows that *THE FORM MUST BE DETERMINED IN THESE VERY SAME WORDS.*” (wine). “Since, therefore, these words openly declare this (i.e. transubstantiation) *NO OTHER FORM NEEDS TO BE DETERMINED*”

Thus we can clearly see that the Catechism *openly* and *authoritatively* disagreed with St. Thomas. It overruled St. Thomas and those majority theologians who agreed with him. St. Pius V, himself a Dominican and an avowed Thomist, by *authorizing* and *promulgating* the Catechism, also disagreed with and overruled his great mentor. The Aquinas-Trent conundrum referred to at the beginning of this article which was posed to me thirty-five years ago by the words of Fr. Doronzo has been solved.

“Before the time of the Council of Trent, the vast majority of theologians followed St. Thomas in denying that only the words “This is My Blood” suffice for the validity of the wine. However, after the time of the Council that position shifted dramatically, and today virtually no one follows this position.”

To summarize what we have discussed:

- St. Thomas held that the long form for the wine is necessary for validity.
- The Catechism of Trent authoritatively went against St. Thomas on this issue by declaring that only those words which signify transubstantiation are necessary for validity.

- Regarding the form for the bread, the Catechism proved “*From Reason:*” that the essential form for the bread is simply “This is My Body,” because the essential form must signify and effect what the bread becomes, i.e. it signifies transubstantiation, and therefore no other form is necessary.
- Before demonstrating its proof regarding the wine, the Catechism declared that the *essential* form of the wine *would be found within* the long form cited by the Catechism. It did *not* say that the essential form *is commensurate with* the entire long form.
- Regarding the form for the wine, the Catechism then follows the exact proof “*From Reason:*” that the essential form for the wine is simply “This is My Blood” because these words likewise *must signify and effect what the wine becomes*, i.e., it signifies transubstantiation, and therefore no other form is required.
- After the promulgation of the Catechism, almost all theologians abandoned St. Thomas in holding that the long form of the wine is necessary for validity.