

# CASES AND QUERIES

## ON THE ANTICIPATED MASS AGAIN

With regard to the Indult to anticipate the fulfillment of the obligation of hearing Mass on Sundays and Holy Days on Saturdays and Vigil evenings, may I ask these three questions:

1.—May the Bishop prevent his faithful from making use of the privilege in question?

2. — May the faithful fulfill two different precepts with only one Mass, if Saturday or Monday are Days of Obligation?

3. — Which are the privileges which accompany solemn feasts" that can be enjoyed on Saturday and Vigils according to said Indults? Is the faculty to binate and trinate among them?

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**Ad 1um** — The answer to the first question depends on the answer to this one: who are the direct beneficiaries of the Indult, the Bishops or the faithful? A careful reading of the Rescript brings us to the conclusion that the faithful are the subjects or direct beneficiaries.

We are aware that some hold the opinion that the Bishops are the beneficiaries of the Indult. They base their belief on the words of the Rescript: "Sacra Congregatio Concilii... Episcopis... benigne tribuit facultatem". However, they overlook the clause used by the Holy See immediately after these words, namely "juxta preces", which means *as requested*. In other words, the Bishops have been given what they had requested. But what did they request? That "the faithful could comply with the above mentioned obligation of hearing Mas...": "*ut fidelis adimplere possint obligationem... audiendo sacrum...*" The Bishops did not

petition for themselves, the faculty to allow their faithful to anticipate the fulfillment of the precept; they petitioned said faculty for the faithful. And their petition was granted as requested. If this faculty was granted to the faithful by the Holy See, the Bishops may not inhibit their faithful from making use of it.

Of course, any anticipation of Sundays and Holy Days depends on the Bishop ultimately, since it is the local Ordinary who may allow evening Masses. If he does not give faculty to say Mass in the afternoon the Mass cannot be anticipated.

Our answer to the first question is: the Bishop may not inhibit his faithful from anticipating the fulfillment of their obligation by hearing Mass on the afternoon of Saturdays and Vigils. But the Bishop may prevent such anticipation by not allowing any Mass in the afternoons of Saturdays and Vigils.

**Ad 2um** — The answer to the second question should be the reply given by moralists to the question whether two or more different precepts may be fulfilled by a single act. With regard to this moral problem we quote what FR. LUDOVICUS J. FANFANI, O.P. says in his *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, I, Romae, 1949, p. 266. He poses the question: "Utrum per unum numero actum possit aliquando pluribus preceptis simul satisfieri?" And he replies: "*Affirmative, si diversa illa precepta cadunt super eandem materiam et ob eundem finem. Ratio est, quia tunc, scilicet quando materia praeceptorum eadem, est, idemque finis, unico actu totum ponitur quod per diversas leges praecipitur: et ideo unico actu pluribus illis praeceptis satisficit.*"

Applying this principle to our problem, we see that two different precepts can now be fulfilled in the afternoon of the first of two consecutive holy days of obligation, that is, on Saturday evening if Saturday is a holy day, or on Sunday evening if a holy day falls on Monday.<sup>1</sup> Both obligations refer to the same matter namely to *hearing Mass*, and both have the same purpose, to *honor God*. If, as the moralists say, two

<sup>1</sup> In virtue of the Feb. 13, 1968 Rescript reducing the feastdays of obligation, the possibility envisioned in this solution is noticeably also lessened. Ed.

precepts referring to the same matter and with the same purpose may be fulfilled with a single act, the logical conclusion is, that the faithful may now, by hearing a single Mass in the afternoon of the first of two consecutive days of obligation, satisfy the two precepts attached to these two days.

Some will reply that these obligations belong to different days and they should be fulfilled in different days also. Our answer is that this is true when the time for the fulfillment of both obligation is different, not when both may be legally fulfilled at the same time. Since the Church has rendered, through this Indult, the afternoon of the first of two consecutive days of obligation useful and available to fulfill both precepts, there is no reason to demand two different Masses to fulfill the two precepts. When a Holy Day of obligation falls on Sunday the Church is satisfied with a single Mass. Why? Because the same period of time is available to fulfill two precepts which are similar in nature and in purpose. What the ordinary course of nature does, may be allowed by the Church—by special concession. This is what the Church has done, namely, that the precept of the second consecutive day of obligation may be fulfilled in the afternoon of the first day of obligation. If one Mass is enough to fulfill two precepts when two Days of obligation fall on the same day, one Mass should also be enough when the Church allows to anticipate the fulfillment of the obligation of the second day to the afternoon of the first one.

Our answer, then, to the second question is: the faithful may fulfill the two different precepts with only one Mass heard in the afternoon of the first of the two consecutive days of obligation.

**Ad 3um**—The third question is easy to solve if we follow the original text of the Indult. There are two great and substantial differences between the original Latin and the English translation namely: *first*, while the Latin text mentions explicitly Saturdays and Vigils of Holy Days for the anticipated Mass, the English version mentions only Saturdays, saying nothing about Vigils; *second* the English version has a clause which does not appear in the original Latin. It is the same clause quoted by our Consultant, namely: “together with the other privileges which accompany solemn feasts.”

These two great diversities have given rise to the following questions: first, is there any indult at all to anticipate the Mass of Holy Days of obligation that do not fall on Sunday? The English version says nothing about it. Second, which are "the privileges that accompany solemn feasts" and maybe enjoyed now on Saturdays according to the English version? Is the faculty to binate and trinate among them? This is exactly the third question of our consultant.

With the original text of the Indult before our eyes, these two questions are easily solved. The answer to the first question is: the Mass of both Sunday and Holy Days of obligation may be anticipated in the afternoon of the previous day. The reply to the second question is: the original Latin says nothing about privileges. The corresponding clause in the English version was a very bad translation: "*ceterorum pervigiliorum, quae praecedunt solemnes festivitates*", says the original Latin; "... together with the other privileges which accompany solemn feasts", reads the English version. They are entirely different.

Our answer, then to the third question is: the original text of the Indult says nothing about privileges. No privilege of solemn feast is transferred to Saturdays and Vigils of Holy Days, save the privilege of complying with the obligation to hear Mass attached to the next day.

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