

NEW COKE – NEW MASS

(This article first appeared in *Apropos* No 26, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 2008. It is now posted on the *Apropos* website: www.apropos.org.uk)

‘For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light’ Luke 16:8.

(In the following article we willingly acknowledge our extensive borrowings from the Wikipedia article on *New Coke*. We also state at the outset that while we have made an analogy between a commercial product and the New Mass, we recognise that there is a fundamental incommensurability between the Mass and the commercial world. On reading the *New Coke* history, however, we were struck by troubling parallels and a marked difference between the purveyors of *New Coke* and those who imposed the New Mass. The former recognised the fruits of their experiment and took corrective action, the latter’s obstinacy suggests a darker purpose.)

In 1985 the *Coca Cola* company sought to replace the traditional *Coke* with a version known as *New Coke*. Although the *Novus Coke* post-dated the *Novus Ordo*, there are lessons which we might learn from the *Coca Cola* company’s experience and which might also allow us to conclude that the introduction and imposition of the *Novus Ordo* was driven more on revolutionary Modernist than pastoral grounds.

Coke’s *aggiornamento*

Coca Cola’s market had been in decline when Roberto Goizueta, of Cuban antecedents, took over as Chief Executive. He *‘told employees that there would be no sacred cows in how the company did its business, including how it formulated its drinks’* – the secular equivalent, one might say, of *aggiornamento*.

The company proceeded to carry out secret market research to test and perfect a new flavour for the product, but unlike the ‘market research’ for the new Mass (the *normative Mass*) which *‘was in substance rejected by the Synod of Bishops’*¹, the surveys for *New Coke* indicated that most would drink it if it were *Coca Cola*. A small minority, however, were opposed at the outset to this tampering with an iconic drink, including the famous *Coke* addict and fellow Cuban, Fidel Castro.

New or Nothing

Goizueta, aping Pope Paul VI, was not prepared to have the old and new marketed together. It was to be *‘New Coke or no Coke’*. And just as the liturgical revolutionaries claimed to have overcome the objections of Cardinal Ottaviani who had opposed the New Mass², Goizueta claimed to have had the blessing of his predecessor, R.

¹ Cf. *Brief Critical Study of the New Order of the Mass*, of 1969 by a group of Roman Theologians which along with a letter from Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci is known as ‘The Ottaviani Intervention’. It was sent to Paul VI. We have used the (undated) translation published by the “Lumen Gentium” Foundation, London and distributed by the Latin Mass Society. This study states (p.7): *‘Since the “normative Mass” now reintroduced and imposed as the Novus Ordo Missae, was in substance rejected by the Synod of Bishops, was never submitted to the collegial judgement of the Episcopal conferences, nor have the people – least of all in mission lands – ever asked for any reform of the Holy Mass whatsoever, one fails to comprehend the motives behind the new legislation which overthrows a tradition unchanged since the 4th and 5th centuries...’*. See also the evidence produced by Fr Brian Harrison that there was no great desire, just prior to the Council, for liturgical change – Cf. ‘Episcopal Attitudes to Liturgical change on the Eve of Vatican II’ in *Living Tradition* No. 104, March 2003. Also ‘A Reform of the Mass? Britain has other priorities.’ In *Apropos*, No 18, pp 69-74.

² For example, Msgr. Aimes-Georges Mortimort, a French liturgist, claimed in an article in *L’Osservatore Romano* that Cardinal Ottaviani *‘declared that he was satisfied with the doctrinal clarifications [regarding the New Mass] that the Pope had given in two addresses in November 1969’* and that his letter to Paul VI which accompanied *The Brief Critical Study* had been published without his permission. Jean Madiran accused Cardinal Ottaviani’s secretary, Msgr. Agustino, of having gained the blind Cardinal’s signature to a letter to that effect by trickery – an accusation he did not refute. See chapter XXIII of Michael Davies’ *Pope Paul’s New Mass* for a more detailed discussion of this matter.

W. Woodruff, who had made *Coke* the international brand it was. Following *New Coke's* launch hundreds of thousands voiced their complaints by phone and one observer remarked that *Coke's* demise was discussed by these complainants as if it were a death in the family.

Kosher Ordo

One who had changed a century of tradition was not averse to signalling that his new formula was not written in tablets of stone – the beverage equivalent of the permanent liturgical revolution which followed from the *Novus Ordo*. And, just as liturgical revolutionaries would indicate that changes had been effected in the *Traditional Mass* by pre-conciliar Popes, Goizueta revealed that even the old *Coke* had been changed at the request (yes, this is fact not fiction!) by a Rabbi so that it might be certified *kosher* – analogous one might say to Jules Isaac's demands that the traditional Good Friday liturgy might be certified “*kosher*” too, or to ecumenical influence in the confection of the *Novus Ordo*.

We don't do failure

The arrogance of post-conciliar clerics could also be found in Goizueta. When asked if *Diet Coke* would be reformulated too if *New Coke* ‘is a success’, he replied sharply, ‘*This is a success*’, a mantra that one might hear repeatedly from Novusordonistas as they view their empty pews.

While *New Coke* was initially popular in New York and Washington DC, it met with opposition in the South and some other areas. The Southerners saw the change as ‘*another surrender to the “Yankees”*’ [Modernists?].

No bottling out

Some *Coca Cola* executives sought a return of the old *Coke* fairly soon after the launch of the new variety, and some customers tried to obtain the old *Coke* from abroad. The bottlers too, tired of the abuse they were receiving, sought the reintroduction of the old. No such luck with the *Novus Ordo* whose “trial” lasted exceedingly longer and which was ruthlessly maintained by Bishops (despite protests). There was no bottling out by these even though the “product” was in a state of permanent change, the brand name affording the only stability to a “product” which varied in accordance with the whims of each celebrating priest. The very formula was essentially changed by translation into the vernacular particularly when managed by groups such as ICEL. Very few bishops sought the return of the old and the faithful had to seek the old *Mass* where they could.

Plummeting *Mass* attendances had no effect on the hard-nosed purveyors of the *Novus Ordo*. Attendance, they claimed, went down not as a result of the new formula itself but because of ‘*misinterpretations and distorted ideas in the Council's liturgical renewal*’. The Synod of Bishops in 2005 advised us that attendance at the *Novus Ordo* has in some places dwindled to a mere 5% almost akin to *New Coke's* share of the market following the reintroduction of the old *Coke*.

The results intended

The *New Coke* experiment lasted barely 3 months whereas the *Novus Ordo* has lasted 4 decades. The former experiment is often cited as an example of what happens when one interferes with a traditional product. Donald Keough, *Coca Cola's* president admitted ‘*The simple fact is that all the time and money and skill poured into consumer research on the new Coca Cola could not measure or reveal the deep and abiding emotional attachment to original Coca Cola felt by so many people.*’ It took *Coca Cola* executives little time to evaluate the disastrous consequences of changing tradition. The Catholic hierarchy persist in novelty in liturgy and catechesis despite the awful consequences. A pastoral response to such a crisis would have led to the type of “pastoral” response made by *Coca Cola* - abandonment of a product which had given rise to such a drastic fall in consumer support. One can only deduce from the hierarchy's response that their opposition to the *Traditional Mass* and traditional catechesis was not driven by concern for their flocks. A small newsletter has recently taken to

displaying a footer on all its pages. It reads: *'Remember: - The results of Government policy are the results intended'*³. One can only surmise that this too is the policy of the Modernist mafia. How else can one explain their obdurate insistence on pursuing policies which have drastically reduced their congregations?

A S Fraser (Editor).

³ *The Liverpool Newsletter*, Room 407, 12 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1DD