

Vatican II captured the essence of a paradigm shift that was already underway in the Church concerning how her members (lay and ordained) viewed both worship and the worshipping assembly. The liturgical reforms which arose from the Council's work served as the fullest expression of this shift – a shift centered on (among other things) “full, conscious and active participation” of the faithful. I believe without a doubt that these reforms were not only good for the Church, but necessary.

In the past decade I've encountered a rise in tradition-based attitudes concerning the post-Vatican II liturgy. One attitude wishes to interpret the Council's work more traditionally than the reforms of the 1960s. Another attitude denounces the entire Council as an aberration and seeks to erase both the Council and the post-Council liturgical reforms from the Church's tradition.

While I do not subscribe to either attitude, I believe the former holds a measure of validity. If nothing else, it acknowledges the historical truth that paradigmatic reforms in the Church often do not occur overnight, in a short span of years, or even in a generation. What may have been the fullest expression of something in 1970 may or may not be the fullest expression in 2010 or the final expression at a future date. Thus, I am open to engage in mutual dialogue with Catholics who hold a more traditional interpretation of Vatican II.