



Balta Lelija

9. August 2026
11TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (VETUS ORDO)
“Hold Fast to the Tradition”

1 Cor 15:1–10

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me.

The Apostle reminds us of the importance of remaining faithful to traditional teachings. This is not some kind of inflexible rigidity, as some might think—those who welcome modernist interpretations or who would like to regard the texts themselves as merely products of their time. The danger is obvious: if we no longer hold with undivided conviction that God has revealed the truth to us—a truth that can be understood more deeply but not altered—then we drift into the currents of relativism. We then find ourselves on a path where we no longer interpret our present reality in light of the Word of God but instead impose a time-bound perspective on the Gospel. This, however, has devastating consequences, as we can see in the Church’s current situation.

We draw life from the faithful tradition, which we bring to life in our own time, learning in the process how to express it ever more effectively through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so as to pass on the message of the Gospel to our contemporaries. However, only the unadulterated Gospel bears the fruit God intended. Even minor changes that contradict the spirit of the Gospel endanger faith. It is not for nothing that we are told that not a single iota of the Law is to be changed, and the Book of Revelation points out the following: “I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if

any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.” (Rev. 22:18–19)

In the story of the temptation, it is important to note that the devil himself quotes Holy Scripture to induce Jesus to act in ways that oppose God. Therefore, great vigilance is required.

If a false light were to enter within us—that is, an error or even just the path leading to an error—then a first form of blindness would already set in, for the supernatural light of God’s truth would no longer enter the soul unhindered, and the mind would be partially darkened. Thus, as another translation puts it, it is easy to see why the Apostle emphasizes holding fast to the words he proclaimed (cf. 1 Cor. 15:2).

The Apostle summarizes the key points of the gospel message once more and then moves on to speak of himself. Paul never forgot that he had persecuted the Church of God, and that the Lord appearing in his life was undeserved grace. This became a helpful reminder for him, one that evidently drove him to do more than others, though he adds that it was the rich grace of God at work in him.

This may be a particular source of comfort and motivation for those of us who lived in opposition to or were indifferent to God before our conversion. God forgave Paul and called him to ministry. The Apostle to the Gentiles responded with his whole being. His guilt was forgiven, and the memory of it did not paralyze him, as we can see from his life. It may have even moved him to hasten the necessary steps of surrendering to God’s will.

For this 11th Sunday after Pentecost, let us take to heart: Let us remain faithful to our Catholic faith without falling into inflexible rigidity. Let us entrust ourselves to God’s grace and mercy so that a former life far from God may be transformed into a fruitful life in the Lord’s service through God’s grace. The beloved Apostle is a wonderful example of this.

Meditation on the Daily Reading in the Novus Ordo:

<https://en.elijamission.net/letter-to-the-romans-rom-91-5-pauls-zeal-for-the-people-of-israel/>