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## The Good Friday oration as defined in the rubrics in the light of the twentieth-century liturgical reforms

### Introduction

The Good Friday oration is a special prayer of the Church because of its solemn character.<sup>1</sup> What is more, through a long period of time, actually until the 1960s, it was the only oration said during liturgical celebrations not only in the period of Holy Week but also throughout the liturgical year.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1950s, the oration has undergone many changes, which was connected with the reform of *Sabato Sancto* and the reform of the whole Holy Week. The renewal of the Catholic liturgy during Paul VI's pontificate led to subsequent modifications of the celebrations of the Good Friday oration. The third typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal introduced further changes.

The paper attempts to analyse the changes to the Good Friday oration in the light of the rubrics and practical way of realising this prayer. The goal will be achieved thanks to the analysis of the changes in the liturgical books within selected categories. The analyses are based on the following sources: Benedict

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<sup>1</sup> See D. Mupaya Kapiten, *Vivre avec Dieu. La prière chrétienne au quotidien*, Kinshasa 2016, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> The Second Vatican Council encouraged to revise the oration in the Order of Holy Mass (point of 53 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*). The realization of this postulate took place several years later in the document *De oratione communi seu fidelium*. See 'Constitutio de sacra liturgia,' *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 56 (1964), pp. 97-138; *De oratione communi seu fidelium; Natura, momentum ac structura criteria atque specimina coetibus territorialibus Episcoporum proposita*, Città del Vaticano 1966; P. Kulbacki, 'Modlitwa powszechna w polskich księgach liturgicznych,' in A. Żądło (ed.), *Praedicamus Christum crucifixum. Słowo Boże w liturgii Kościoła. Księga Jubileuszowa dedykowana Księdzu Arcybiskupowi Damianowi Zimoniowi Metropolicie Krakowskiemu w 25. Rocznice święceń biskupich*, Katowice 2010, p. 350.



XV's Roman Missal, *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* and two typical editions of the revised Roman Missals from 1970 and 2002.<sup>3</sup> The paper is divided into six parts. Firstly, the Good Friday oration will be placed in the context of the whole liturgy of Good Friday. Then the order of the prayers and those directly involved in the oration will be presented. Further, the liturgical vestments used in the liturgy will be defined. Finally, we will focus on the place of the celebration and the ways of conducting the Solemn Intercessions.

### The order of the Good Friday service

The division of the Good Friday liturgy is not obvious. Admittedly, in the Polish tradition there are four parts of the Good Friday liturgy, which has been testified in the Polish translation of the Roman Missal.<sup>4</sup> However, in the first and the third typical editions of Paul VI's Roman Missal there are three parts. This difference is relatively easy to explain – the Polish translation includes an additional rite, which was absent in the typical edition of the revised Roman Missal (the procession of the Funeral of Christ).

Another problem can arise with the fact that in *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* there were also four parts of the liturgy, the procession to the tomb not being included. To explain this discrepancy, it is worth juxtaposing the particular parts. Benedict XV's Roman Missal has no headings that mention any part of the liturgy. Hence, this liturgical book is not helpful in this respect. *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* distinguishes the following parts: readings, prayer of the faithful,<sup>5</sup> veneration of the cross and communion.<sup>6</sup> The Renewed Roman Missal in its first and third editions mentions the following parts: the Liturgy of the Word, the Veneration of the Holy Cross and Holy Communion.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, two issues should be noted. Firstly, in the revised Missal the start of the liturgy of the word is not placed at the beginning of the service but begins with the readings. This means that prostration and the opening prayers do not belong to any part of the Good Friday liturgy. Secondly, the prayer of the

<sup>3</sup> These are the sources: *Missale romanum ex decreto Concilii Tridentini restitutum S. PII V pontificis maximi jussu editum aliorumque pontificum cura recognitum a S. Pio X reformatum et Benedicti XV auctoritate Vulgatum*, Vatican 2004; *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus. Editio iuxta typicam vaticanam*, Ratisbonae 1955; *Missale Romanum ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II Instauratum Auctoritate Pauli PP. VI Promulgatum. Editio iuxta Typicam*, Vatican 1970; *Missale romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Pauli PP. VI promulgatum Ioannis Pauli PP. II cura recognitum*, Città del Vaticano 2002.

<sup>4</sup> See J. Dubina, *I riti peculiari del triduo pasquale in Slovacchia: Storia, celebrazione, teologia*, Romae 2012, pp. 97-98.

<sup>5</sup> In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* there are two petitions in this part of the liturgy: *orationes solennes* and *oratio fidelium*.

<sup>6</sup> In the traditional textbooks (before Pius XII's reforms) this part of the liturgy was called "Missa praesanctificatorum."

<sup>7</sup> See R. Féry, *Historia świąt chrześcijańskich*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 85-86.

faithful has been placed within the liturgy of the word, and thus the intercessions are not distinguished as a separate part of the liturgy.<sup>8</sup>

In the context of these juxtapositions, it is simpler to place the orations within the Good Friday liturgy. In the revised Missal it is the first part of the liturgy (or more precisely, it is within the first part).<sup>9</sup> In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* it is the second part of the liturgy.<sup>10</sup> One may be tempted to say, on the basis of the analogy of the rites, that the prayers were also the second part of the traditional Roman Missals before 1951.<sup>11</sup>

### The order of the intercessions

In traditional order of the Good Friday oration, there were nine prayers: (1) for the Church, (2) for the Pope, (3) for the Clergy and Laity of the Church, (4) for the Emperor, (5) for Those Preparing for Baptism, (6), for Those in Special Need (7), for non-Catholics, (8) for the Jews, and (9) for non-Christians.<sup>12</sup> It should be remembered that since the beginning of the nineteenth century the prayer for the Emperor was not said because of the fall of the Empire and the Emperor's abdication.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the Missals included nine orations, and practically eight prayers.<sup>14</sup> In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus*, the traditional structure of the orations was kept but the prayer for the Emperor was changed to the prayer for all in public office. Its content was modified significantly. The individual prayers received titles that were absent in Benedict XVI's Roman Missal.

The first typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal introduced substantial revisions. Firstly, a new prayer was added (for Those Who Do Not Believe in God). Secondly, the order of the orations was changed noticeably. Hereafter it was as follows: (1) for the Church, (2) for the Pope, (3) for the Clergy and Laity of the Church, (4) for Those Preparing for Baptism, (5) for non-Catholics (6), for

<sup>8</sup> It is one a section of the liturgy.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Driscoll, *Awesome Glory: Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy, and Theology*, Collegeville 2019, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> See Ph. Rouillard, *Les fêtes chrétiennes en Occident*, Paris 2003, p. 73.

<sup>11</sup> This is the time of the *Sabato Sancto* reforms. See J. Gaume, *Krótki katechizm wytrwałości czyli wykład historyczny, dogmatyczny, moralny i liturgiczny religii, od początków świata aż do dni naszych*, Warszawa 1851, p. 183.

<sup>12</sup> See W. Strykowski, *Podręcznik obrzędów używanych w Kościele katolickim w czasie Wielkiego Tygodnia, w Uroczystość Wniebowstąp. Pańskiego i Zielonych Świątek*, Pelplin 1888, p. 13; K. Lijka, 'Dzieje Triduum Paschalnego,' in: W. Świerżawski (ed.), *Historia liturgii, Mysterium Christi 2*, Zawichost 2012, p. 155.

<sup>13</sup> See P. Guéranger, *La Passion et la Semaine sainte*, Paris 1857, p. 534; Ch.M. Baggs, *The Ceremonies of Holy-Week at the Vatican and S. John Lateran's Described*, Rome 1839, p. 75; B.D. Berger, *Le drame liturgique de Paques*, Paris 1976, p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> See "Wielki Tydzień". *Przewodnik obrzędów i modlitw wielkotygodniowych*, Potulice 1937, p. 78; B. Łaciak, *Przewodnik obrzędów wielkotygodniowych dla użytku kapłanów i służ kościelnych*, Miejsce Piastowe 1928, p. 17; J.J. Saunders, 'The debate on the fall of Rome,' *History* 48 (1963), n. 162, pp. 1-2.

the Jews, (7) for non-Christians, (8) for Those Who Do Not Believe in God, (9) for All in Public Office, and (10) for Those in Special Need. In the third typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal this order was maintained.

### Those involved in the oration

In a sense, it may seem inappropriate to ask who is involved in the prayer, since the intercessions concern the whole Church, clergy and laity. Rather, we should ask who directly says the prayers that constitute the Good Friday litany.

Benedict XVI's Roman Missal assigned special roles to three people: celebrant, deacon and subdeacon. The celebrant proclaims the intention, the invocation "oremus" and the second part of the oration, the deacon – "flectamus genua" and the subdeacon – "levate."<sup>15</sup> In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* there were two ways to say this prayer. The rubrics mentioned the celebration with the deacon and subdeacon as well as the celebration without these persons. The first list is the same as in Benedict XVI's Roman Missal, however, the invocation "levate" is said by the deacon, and not the subdeacon.<sup>16</sup> In the second order, the whole prayer is offered by the celebrant.<sup>17</sup>

In the first typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal, the situation is more complicated. The common way of praying is that the priest says the intention and the second part of the oration,<sup>18</sup> but this instruction omits the traditional invocations "flectamus genua" and "levate." These invocations are present in the second way of saying the Good Friday oration. The problem concerns another issue – whether, according to the rubrics, these intercessions should be made by a deacon, which is not obvious. It is true that in the context of these petitions the rubric "tradita invitatio diaconi" appears; nevertheless, this genitive case does not have to indicate the person who is to utter the invocations. The genitive may well refer to a person who traditionally had to say these calls, and it does not have to prejudice the continuation of this tradition. So, depending on the interpretation of the genitive, the prayers of the Good Friday oration can be offered by the celebrant or along with the deacon who only says the invocations "flectamus genua" and "levate."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See G.Ch. Moroni, *Fonctions papales à Saint-Pierre de Rome, pendant la semaine sainte*, Paris 1845, p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> See F.R. McManus, *The Rites of Holy Week: Ceremonies, Preparations, Music, Commentary*, Paterson 1956, p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> Another issue should be noted – in the liturgical book (*Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus*) there is noticeable information in the rubrics that the final acclamation "amen" had to be said by all people (Latin "omnes").

<sup>18</sup> The rubrics do not say that it must be the celebrant.

<sup>19</sup> What is interesting here is that the rubrics do not mention the subdeacon. This is strange for two reasons. Firstly, in *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* the subdeacon utters no invocation, but he was mentioned in the rubrics. Secondly, the subdiaconate and the minor orders were removed by Paul VI in 1972. See Paulus VI, 'Motu proprio Disciplina circa Primam Tonsuram, Ordines Minores et Subdiaconatum in Ecclesia Latina innovatur *Ministeria*

In the third typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal, the issue is even more complicated. Again, there are two ways of saying the Good Friday oration (with or without "flectamus genua" and "levate").<sup>20</sup> There is the information that the priest<sup>21</sup> has to utter the second part of the oration, but there is a change to the intention. According to the rubrics, the intention should be offered by the deacon or if he is absent, by a lay person.<sup>22</sup> The priest is not mentioned at all, which suggests that legislator did not provide for the possibility of this activity.

### Liturgical vestments

In Benedict XV's Roman Missal there is no information in the Good Friday rubrics as to how the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon should be dressed. The only instruction is that the colour of the vestments should be black. So, in relation to the celebrant, he had to wear normal liturgical vestments provided for the celebration of the Holy Mass: amice, alb, cingulum, maniple, stole and chasuble. Since in the context of the oration there is no information about the change of the vestment, it should be assumed that the celebrant wears this attire while offering the intercessions.

As for the deacon and subdeacon, the issue is more complicated. The direct reference is chapter XIX, point 6 of *Rubricæ generales Missalis*.<sup>23</sup> According to this rubric, the deacon and subdeacon have to put on the so-called folded chasubles (Latin *planetæ plicatae*).<sup>24</sup> As it can be deduced from the rubrics, the deacon had to remove the folded chasuble before the Gospel reading. In this point he had two options. He could hang the chasuble across his arm or in lieu of the chasuble he could use the so-called broad stole (Latin *stola latior*). Because of this non-practical style of the chasuble, the second option seemed better. According to the rubrics, the deacon could wear a folded chasuble after Communion. In light of this information, it can be claimed that during the prayer

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*quaedam*, 'Acta Apostolicae Sedis 64 (1972), p. 529-534. So in the first typical edition of the Roman Missal, the subdeacon had some role which was presented in the following study: D. Mielnik, 'Analiza porównawcza posługi subdiakona w obrzędach Mszy Świętej według Mszałów Jana XXIII i Pawła VI,' in D. Mielnik (ed.), *Iuvenes errantes 2016*, Lublin 2017, pp. 38-50.

<sup>20</sup> Also in this case, we have the unclear phrase "diaconi," however, this time the syntax is different – "iuxta traditionem, invitationes diaconi."

<sup>21</sup> Again, it is not underlined that it has to be the celebrant.

<sup>22</sup> See K. Lijka, 'Triduum Paschalne w Mszale rzymskim z 2002 r.,' *Anamnesis* 8 (2002), n. 3, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> Naturally, this concerns the traditional rubrics and not those reformed in 1960 and incorporated into John XXIII's Roman Missal.

<sup>24</sup> Since this paper deals with another research problem, the issue of the folded chasubles and broad stoles will not be analysed. More information can be found in D. Mielnik, 'The folded chasuble – lost vestment of Roman rite,' in D. Mielnik (ed.), *Iuvenes errantes 2016*, Lublin 2017, pp. 170-180.

the deacon was to wear a broad stole and the subdeacon should appear in a folded chasuble.<sup>25</sup>

In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* the rubrics directly informed about the liturgical vestments during the Good Friday oration. The celebrant was to wear a black cope, the deacon a black dalmatic and the subdeacon a black tunicella.<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that these vestments were not present at the beginning of the liturgy. According to the rubrics, for the first part of the liturgy the celebrant and deacon had to wear an amice, alb, cincture and stole, the subdeacon – an amice, alb and cincture.<sup>27</sup> As the rubrics provide another change of vestments for the third part of the liturgy, it should be noted that the choice of special vestments for the second part of the liturgy somehow distinguished it. Indeed, the dalmatic and tunicella were still to be worn during the fourth part of the liturgy. However, at this time they were no longer black but violet.

In the first typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal, the regulations were simple. According to the introductory rubrics, the ministers were to wear red vestments as for Holy Mass, not black or violet. So the celebrant wore an (amice,) alb, (cincture,) stole and chasuble.<sup>28</sup> The deacon and subdeacon were not mentioned in the rubrics. As the rubrics did not mention the changing of the vestments during the Good Friday prayer, the celebrant offered the prayer in this vestment. The only novelty seen in the third typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal is the information about the deacon. If present, he has to wear the same vestments as for Mass, and he continues to wear them during the Solemn Intercessions.

### The place to pray the oration

In Benedict XV's Roman Missal, the rubrics are very simple and clear – the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon should stand on the side of epistle, and so on

<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that the regulations were connected with cathedral churches. In minor churches, the deacon and subdeacon did not wear the folded chasuble but amice, alb, cincture and maniple (subdeacon) with a stole (the deacon).

<sup>26</sup> See W. Danielski, 'Męka Pańska w odnowionej liturgii,' in: H.D. Wojtyński, J.J. Kopeć (ed.), *Męka Chrystusa wczoraj i dziś*, Lublin 1981, p. 210; *Mały ceremoniał dla kleryków i kapłanów*, Poznań 1957, p. 63.

<sup>27</sup> It is easy to see that the maniple and chasuble were not present. The maniple and chasuble were Eucharistic vestments (from the traditional point of view). This was one of the reformers' attempts to change the traditional understanding of the Good Friday liturgy as *missa praesanctificatorum* (Mass of preconsecrated sacrifices). The absence of the folded chasubles was to simplify the rite. The final removal of these vestments took place in the new codex of rubrics in 1960 (the folded chasubles were used outside Holy Week even after 1955).

<sup>28</sup> According to point 91 of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal from 1970, using the amice and cincture depends on the style of the alb. The maniple is not considered and its facultative use was regulated in *Tres Abhinc Annos* (point 25). See Sacra Congregatio Rituum, 'Instructio altera ad executionem Constitutionis de sacra Liturgia recte ordinandam *Tres abhinc annos*,' *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 442-448.

the right side of the altar.<sup>29</sup> In *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus*, according to the rubrics the liturgical book had to be placed by the acolytes in the central part of the altar. Also, this was where the celebrant, deacon and subdeacon had to stand during the oration. Thus in both cases, the oration was prayed in front of the altar. There is one important detail which should be noticed. Following the logic of the rubrics in Benedict XV's Missal, the cross that will be adored during the third part of the liturgy is on the altar from the beginning of the rite. Yet, according to the rubrics of *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* this cross had to be carried from the sacristy for the third part of the Good Friday liturgy. On the basis of these rubrics, it can be claimed that in the traditional Good Friday liturgy the oration is directed to the cross, i.e. to crucified Christ.<sup>30</sup> In the renewed Holy Week during the Pius XII pontificate, the prayer was not prayed before the cross.

The first typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal differently dealt with the problem of the place of the Good Friday oration. The rubrics pointed to three places from where the prayer could be said: the chair for the priest-celebrant, the ambo and altar; however, the first one was preferred.<sup>31</sup> According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the chair for the priest should be directed towards the faithful (point 271) and so should the ambo and altar (points 262 and 272). Consequently, the celebrant prayed the oration facing the gathered people. In the third typical edition of Paul VI's Roman Missal, the place was slightly changed. According to the rubrics, the intention should be prayed from the ambo and the second part of the oration from the chair for the priest-celebrant or the altar. Again the chair for the priest was preferred for the aforementioned reasons.

### Ways of offering the prayer

The rubrics of Benedict XV's Roman Missal did not mention an alternative way of praying the Good Friday oration, which suggested that the regulations, introduced before 1951, allowed only one way, which was the following one: at the side of the epistle, the celebrant being directed to the altar said the intention and the invocation "oremus." Afterwards, the deacon, standing behind the celebrant, prayed "flectamus genua," and everybody had to kneel down.<sup>32</sup> In turn, the subdeacon standing behind the deacon uttered "levate," and everybody

<sup>29</sup> See *The Office of Holy Week in Latin and English, According to the Roman Missal and Breviary*, London 1808, p. 251; *Mszal rzymski dla uzytku wiernych*, Kraków 1874, p. 473.

<sup>30</sup> Although the celebrant stands at the side of the epistle, according to *Rubricae generales Missalis* during the invocation "oremus" the celebrant was to bow towards the cross, which showed the direction to which the prayers should be directed. See O. Drobný, *Ceremonie Wielkiego Tygodnia*, Rybnik Śl. 1928, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> This conclusion emerges from two circumstances. Firstly, the chair for the priest-celebrant is mentioned as the first place. Secondly, next to the other place, there is the phrase "pro opportunitate."

<sup>32</sup> The rubrics of *Rubricae generales Missalis* also said that during kneeling down the celebrant had to put his hands on the altar and not put them together.

had to arise. Finally, the celebrant proclaimed the second part of the oration and the acclamation “amen.”<sup>33</sup>

This way of praying was retained in *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus*. However, there was one modification – the deacon, and not the subdeacon, was to say “levate.”<sup>34</sup> The 1955 document permitted an alternative way of saying the oration in the absence of the deacon and subdeacon. Then the celebrant himself was to utter all of these invocations.<sup>35</sup>

In the first typical edition of Paul VI’s Roman Missal, both ways were described. The following is described in the first place. After the priest had said the intention, there was a moment of silence, during which everybody prayed individually. Then the priest said the second part of the oration, to which everybody gave the acclamation “amen.” In this variant, therefore, the invocations “oremus,” “flectamus genua” and “levate” were left. The faithful might either stand or kneel throughout the intercessions. The second form resembled that used in the traditional Missals, so with the aforementioned invocations followed by kneeling down for a while.<sup>36</sup> In the third typical edition of Paul VI’s Roman Missal, the instruction was repeated.

### Conclusion

This paper was an attempt to analyse the changes to the Good Friday oration in the light of the rubrics, including the practical ways of saying the oration. This goal was achieved thanks to the analysis of the changes within certain categories in the liturgical books. Benedict XV’s Roman Missal, *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* and two typical editions of the 1970 and 2002 revised Roman Missals were the source materials. The paper was divided into six parts. Firstly, the Good Friday oration was placed within the whole liturgy and its structure was presented. The next parts showed the question of the persons involved in the liturgy and their liturgical vestments. Finally, the place and manner of saying the oration were discussed.

The analyses have allowed us to conclude that the scope of the changes introduced in the rubrics was relatively large. While the place of the Good Friday prayer within the entire liturgy was not changed, its order was significantly modified. The categories of persons who directly participated in the prayer were changed (in the third typical edition of Paul VI’s Roman Missal, even the lay people were admitted). Another modification was related to the liturgical vestments and their colour. The places from which the Solemn Intercessions

<sup>33</sup> Only the prayer for the Jews did not have the invocations “oremus,” “flectamus genua” and “levate.” See F.Cancellieri, *Descrizione delle funzioni della Settimana Santa nella cappella pontificia*, Roma 1802, p. 94.

<sup>34</sup> The rubrics said nothing about the celebrant’s obligation to put his hands on the altar.

<sup>35</sup> Then these invocations were also introduced to the oration for the Jews.

<sup>36</sup> What is interesting is that the rubrics have instructed “flectamus genua” and “levate” but not about “oremus.”



were said were clearly defined, and another way of praying the oration was added.

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## The Good Friday oration as defined in the rubrics in the light of the twentieth-century liturgical reforms

### Summary

The present paper is an attempt to analyse the changes in the Good Friday oration in the light of the rubrics. This was made possible thanks to the analyses of the changes within certain categories in the liturgical books. The source material included Benedict XV's Roman Missal, *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus* and two typical editions of the revised Roman Missals from 1970 and 2002. The paper was divided into six parts. Firstly, the Good Friday oration was placed within the whole liturgy and its structure was presented. The next parts showed the question of the persons involved in the liturgy and their liturgical vestments. Finally, the place and manner of saying the oration were discussed. The analyses have led to the conclusion that the scope of the changes introduced in the rubrics was relatively large. While the place of the Good Friday prayer within the entire liturgy was not changed, its order was significantly modified. The categories of persons who directly participated in the prayer were changed. Another modification was related to the liturgical vestments and their colour. The places from which the Solemn Intercessions were said were clearly defined, and another way of praying the oration was added.

**Keywords:** Good Friday; Good Friday oration; missal rubrics; Roman Missal; liturgical reforms

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