

Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite

25th-31st MAY 2008

The External Solemnity of Corpus Christi

Ordo of Pope Bl. John XXIII

+ -By Apostolic Indult, 25 Nov. 1885, the Solemnization of the Feast Of Corpus Christi was transferred to the Sunday following [Thursday], and is now so observed.

Sunday, The External Solemnity of Corpus Christi

Monday, St. Philip Neri

Tuesday, St. Bede the Venerable

Wednesday, St. Augustine of Canterbury

Thursday, St. Mary Magdeline of Pazzi

Friday, Sacred Heart of Jesus

Saturday, Queenship of Mary

Saving the 1962 Missal from 1962

by Michael E. Lawrence

I have a friend with whom I was musing one day about the future of the Traditional Mass, particularly with respect to the music that is used. We developed a saying: "Save the 1962 Missal from 1962."

To be sure, there are many who, when they hear the term "Latin Mass," think of much that is to be regretted: the mid-20th century prominence of Low Masses and sentimental ballad music is but one example. Also, as one well-known priest observed, there is the fact that in the years before the liturgical changes, the Mass was not celebrated in Latin, but rather in gibberish, doubtless a reference to the hurried manner in which the liturgy was undertaken in many cases.

All of this lurks in the back of my mind as I recall a conversation I had with my then-boss shortly after the election of Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. The possibility of widespread permission for the Latin Mass (a *motu proprio* from the pope) came up, to which my boss immediately replied that we "can't turn back the clock." This kind of thinking is typical of many modernists; it's a kind of Whig-like or Social Darwinist way of looking at the world: the belief that the most advanced point in time represents the highest point of development. [1] "That was then, this is now," might be the colloquial way to sum up this theory of history.

Fast forward to this past Sunday, when I was discussing the present-day use of the 1962 Missal with a parishioner. Certainly, there are many places today that will no doubt celebrate the Traditional Mass as close to the typical mid-20th century American praxis [2] as possible, but in addition, there are many places that are using any and all of the following: 1) weekly High Mass, 2) chant from the *Graduale Romanum* (not the Rossini propers or any other such thing), 3) Mozart and Haydn Ordinaries ("Concert Masses," as they are sometimes unfairly characterized), 4) ancient and modern polyphony, some of which probably never was used much in the Mass because of the liturgical changes in the mid-20th century.

These combinations are, perhaps, unparalleled in history. How often throughout history would one have happened upon a Mass in which the *Graduale Romanum*, Mozart, and Palestrina were all used, as one often does today? How much modern polyphony was used in the Roman Rite before the Traditional Mass was put back into use? How many parishes in the days before the liturgical changes even bothered to cultivate Gregorian chant? [3]

The truth is that we have not "turned back the clock;" this is a phrase that merely panders to careless ways of thinking. The Traditional Roman Rite, as it is celebrated in the 21st century, has characteristics which distinguish it not only from the vast majority of celebrations of the Missal of Pope Paul VI, but also from earlier versions of the Traditional Rite itself, even earlier celebrations of the 1962 Missal. Are there places that will insist on a nostalgic *ars celebrandi*? Absolutely. Nevertheless, we are at a unique moment in history which gives us an opportunity to move forward, not backwards, and, in the process, to save the 1962 Missal from 1962.

[1] I am indebted to Richard Weaver for this insight, which comes from his book *Ideas Have Consequences*.

[2] Of course there were exceptions at that time, but far too few.

[3] St. Agnes parish in St. Paul, MN, comes to mind as a happy exception here, and they have done the full patrimony of sacred music in the context of the *Novus Ordo Missae*.