

Pastor's Message - Two forms of the Roman Rite

August 19, 2007

Effective the 14th of September, Pope Benedict has allowed for wider use of the old Latin Mass also known as the Tridentine Mass. The Tridentine Mass is the “extraordinary form” of the Roman rite; the Mass of John Paul II remains the “ordinary form” of the Roman Rite. You might be wondering why the Pope has allowed wider use of the Tridentine Mass, and you may be interested in what this all means to you as a parishioner at St. Francis by the Sea. As your pastor, I have spent the last several weeks reading the document and evaluating what the impact of this wider permission will be on our parish. First, I believe that the Pope is calling us to a deeper understanding of the great treasure of the Mass, and the responsibility to be faithful to the Church’s law of prayer. The document challenges the faithful to ensure that “great reverence in harmony with current liturgical directives” is present in our liturgies whether celebrating the “ordinary form” or the “extraordinary form” of the Roman rite.

Secondly, while the Pope’s Apostolic Letter allows for wider use of the Tridentine Mass to priests who celebrate private Masses, and to parishes as an extraordinary form when a group of the faithful are attached to the Tridentine Mass, it appears that the Pope envisions many parishes will not desire or be able to provide the extraordinary form of the Mass. This is what the Pope says about the use of the Tridentine Mass or extraordinary form in parishes, “The use of the old Missal (Tridentine Mass) presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often. Already from these concrete presuppositions, it is clearly seen that the new Missal (The Mass of John Paul II) will certainly remain the ordinary form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.”

At this time the ability to offer the extraordinary form is very limited at St. Francis by the Sea. We can still benefit from the Pope’s letter by continuing to celebrate well the Mass in the ordinary form at St. Francis. I will continue to inform you of opportunities to celebrate the extraordinary form when it is available in our Deanery or parish. I will also continue to work with my brother priests, our Liturgy Committee, and Pastoral Council to improve liturgies to “ensure that the Church of Christ offers a worthy ritual to the Divine Majesty, to the praise and glory of His name,” and “to the benefit of all His Holy Church.” Both forms are to be respected and celebrated well, both forms have the capacity to bring us into the mystery of Christ’s redeeming and sanctifying love.

[Click here](#) to find some helpful information on the two forms of the Roman Rite. It is extracted from information provided by the USCCB liturgy committee concerning the “ordinary form of 2007” and the “extraordinary form of 1962”. I hope this information helps you to better understand the recent Apostolic Letter.

Peace and prayers,

Fr. Mike