



Catechesis For the Masses

Basic Teachings on Liturgy and Participation in the Mass in Both Forms.

Part 3: Distinguishing the Two “Forms” of One Roman Rite

“I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” These words of the Nicene Creed that are prayed every Sunday identify what are referred to as the “four marks of the Church.” Each of these four marks indicates an essential characteristic of the Church which always has been present and will remain so through Christ’s divine institution of the Church.

Of particular note, consider the mark of the Church as “one.” This mark speaks to the unity of the Church within the diversity of her members. Such unity is present in the Church from God’s own willing it, as He Himself is unity in the Trinity of persons. The unity of the Church therefore is *not* understood as “uniformity;” it is rather in the union that God Himself establishes within and between Himself and the Church in her distinct members who all live in accord with the true faith.

I begin this column by pointing to the unity of the Church within the diversity of members as such a characteristic can assist us in understanding why the Church can claim to have “two forms” of the “one Roman Rite” of the Holy Mass. For in every offering of the Holy Mass, the gift of God’s saving work is accomplished through the re-presentation of the one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. Through our partaking of this re-presented sacrifice, made present to us in the “unbloody” and “non-violent” manner that Jesus instituted at the Last Supper, we are made sharers in the saving work of God, receiving His divine life and partaking of the unity that is offered to us in “Holy Communion.” While salvation in Christ is offered in a singular way (through the cross) the

sharing in this sacrifice is perpetuated until the end of time through the expression of worship found in the Holy Mass.

Over the 2000 year history of the Church, what has always been consistent is the core truth of the offering of the sacrifice of bread and wine that becomes the Body and Blood of Christ, after the manner of Jesus’ own instituting of such at the Last Supper. However, we must acknowledge that details of early Church history of worship are difficult to know with certainty. For in the first 300 years of the life of the Church, little is known of actual ceremonies, other than allusions by some saints to the reality of the offering being made according to what was given by Jesus, and that the offering was central to the life of the Church - as the Church was living (and thriving) in a world that was hostile toward it, persecuting it and seeking to destroy it. It is only after the early 4th Century that more particular history is able to be known of “what” the celebrating of the Eucharistic sacrifice looked like. It is here that some details which may come as a surprise emerge. Among them is the consistent practice that existed in the Church of Rome, including such elements as the use of the formula for the prayers at the altar that we now refer to as Eucharistic Prayer I, the early presence of chant (and accordingly the universal the use of the Latin language) and even some of the particular prayers that remain in use to this day for major feasts and for saints’ days. In a word, the period from the early 4th century to the end of the 6th century was a time of forming “unity” in the practice of the Church - with the Eucharistic sacrifice being offered throughout Christendom with increas-

ing consistency to what was found in Rome itself. Such consistency with the ways of worship as found in Rome (as the seat of the Pope) has remained the rule of the Church ever since.

Given how this brief history points to unity in the Church over most of her centuries, such consistent unity in times past places us in a very unique time in the life of the Church. For it is very clear from this history that there has never been another time in our Church's life which has experienced such a dramatic shift in practice in such a short amount of time as in these years since Vatican II. While there has already been much debate about these matters that is not useful to us, what is significant for us is the recognition of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on the importance of seeing the reforms of Vatican II *in continuity* with what preceded the council, without treating pre-conciliar worship as fully disregarded or in any way obsolete. Said another way, he shows us that to rightly implement Vatican II requires that it be done in respect for what preceded the council, retaining what was always meant to be retained. In addition, he understood how many of the faithful have not been well nourished by the reforms, citing how the pre-conciliar worship was for them a source of true life in Christ.

Thus, on July 7, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI

issued an important statement called *Summorum Pontificum* to more clearly delineate the legitimacy of the use of the most recent forms of worship from before Vatican II. Included in his statement was a reaffirmation that the Mass as celebrated using the *Roman Missal* issued by John XXIII in 1962 not only was never prohibited, but could be done by any priest in private and could (and should) be made available when a group among the faithful in a given locale desire such. Accordingly, it was Pope Benedict XVI who gave us the terminology of calling the post-Vatican II Mass the "Ordinary Form" of the Roman Rite (as this remains typical in the life of the Church) with the pre-Vatican II Mass being called the "Extraordinary Form" of the Roman Rite. Likewise, he encouraged that where possible, the two "forms" of the "one" rite be a means toward greater enrichment of all worship, with the goods of both forms being accentuated as a way toward greater consistency in the worship of the Church, which in turn would benefit all.

The chart at the below serves to give a very general comparison between the two forms - seeking to help each understand how they are distinct. As we continue our journey, it is this "greater enrichment of all worship" that will be the end goal - that we might experience the unity of God now and forever.

Names/Titles:	<u>Ordinary Form</u>; Mass of Paul VI; Novus Ordo Missae; Mass of Vatican II	<u>Extraordinary Form</u>; Mass of Pius V; Traditional Latin Mass; Tridentine Mass
Current Edition of the Missal:	<i>Roman Missal</i> of John Paul II - 2000	<i>Missale Romanum</i> of John XXIII - 1962
Language/s:	Latin (and Greek) or Vernacular	Latin (the "Kyrie" is in Greek)
Variations:	Technically "none"; yet there are many options within the Missal - leading to literally thousands of expressions of Mass.	Low Mass; High Mass (Missa Cantata) Solemn High Mass; Pontifical High Mass Requiem Mass
Direction:	<i>Ad orientem</i> , with the priest turning to people in specific times; or <i>exclusively facing the people</i> .	Properly <i>Ad orientem</i> when addressing God; turning to the servers (the people) when addressing the people.