

Tridentine Community News

April 15, 2007

Low Sunday

In the Tridentine calendar, today is known as Low Sunday. “Low” refers to the fact that no week in the Church year can compare to Holy Week. Easter Sunday is the highest of high feasts; no other feast, not even Christmas, can compare to it in significance. Therefore, the First Sunday After Easter became known as Low Sunday not because it is particularly restrained, or because only Low Masses are supposed to be celebrated that day, but rather to distinguish it from the solemnity of the previous week’s feast.

N.B.: Pope John Paul II designed the First Sunday After Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. This term reflects the growth in popularity of the devotion held on that day, but it is not an actual replacement for the original name of the Sunday feast, in either the Novus Ordo or Tridentine calendars. The Propers (readings and prayers) have not been changed.

Vidi Aquam

VIDI AQUAM
Sung before the Parochial Mass from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Inclusive.
10th Cent. Mode 8, (I.H.D.)



Vi - di - a - quam * e - gre - di - én - tem - de -
tem - plo, a - lá - te - re - dex - tro,
al - le - lu - ia: et o - mnes ad quos
per - ve - nit a - qua - sta, sal - vi - fa - ti
sunt, et di - cent, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

From Easter Sunday through Pentecost Sunday, the familiar sprinkling rite antiphon *Asprérges Me* is replaced with the *Vidi Aquam*. The text for the *Vidi Aquam*, “I saw water flowing from the right side of the temple, alleluia; and all they to whom that water came were saved; and they shall say: alleluia, alleluia,” is based on Ezekiel 47:1, a foreshadowing of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Easter is a time of initiation, of welcoming new members into the Church, and therefore of

Baptism. The *Vidi Aquam* reminds us of the waters of Baptism, just as the (ordinary) color of the priest’s vestments during the Easter season is white, symbolizing the purity of the newly baptized. Note that we often use gold vestments instead of white during the Easter season, as this is permitted and is another way of portraying the solemnity of the season.

Unlike the *Asperges*, for which there is only one standard musical setting, the *Vidi Aquam* has two settings. The first is the traditional, longer Gregorian setting (pictured at left) found in older hymnals. The second (pictured at right), which appears in books published by the monks of

cf. Ez 47:1-2, 9)



Vi - di a - quam * e - gre - di - on - tem de tem - plo,
a - lá - te - re dex - tro, al - le - lu - ia: et om - nes,
ad quos per - ve - nit a - qua i - sta, sal - vi - fa - ti
sunt, et di - cent, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Solesmes as well as in the eclectic *Collegetville Hymnal*, is a shorter, easier-to-memorize Gregorian version. We will be using both settings during the Easter season.

Requiescat in Pace, Fr. Daniel Johnson

The Tridentine Mass movement has lost a great friend. Fr. Daniel Johnson, long-time pastor of St. Mary’s-by-the-Sea in Huntington Beach, California, passed away on March 18.

Given a failing parish, Fr. Johnson restored the church to a traditional appearance, and walked the entire parish boundaries multiple times to invite people to join the church. In 1992, he obtained approval for a Sunday Tridentine Mass at St. Mary’s. This Mass became popular throughout Southern California, because unlike the other indulgences in the region, it was held at the same site every week, and it was at a time (noon) that made it convenient for people to drive over from wherever they lived in the vast metropolitan Los Angeles region. Standing room-only crowds were common in this church that resembles Detroit’s Holy Family Church in size.



The church itself is located in a residential neighborhood just a few blocks from the beach. The house-like, rather humble wood-frame structure is not elaborately decorated. First-time visitors can be startled by the surfers and sun worshippers walking right in front of St. Mary’s on their way to the beach.



Upon Fr. Johnson’s retirement, the Diocese of Orange revoked permission for the indulgent Mass at St. Mary’s. This resulted in various controversies erupting there, including a nationally publicized one over kneeling after the *Agnus Dei*. Attendance has significantly dropped since the Fr. Johnson days, but the parish still offers a noon Novus Ordo Latin Mass that continues many of the traditions that Fr. Johnson started.

Perhaps not by accident, Fr. Johnson spent his last days at St. Teresita Hospital in Los Angeles County, where a monthly Tridentine Mass is held in the hospital chapel. Fittingly, the Diocese of Orange permitted Fr. Johnson to have a Tridentine Requiem Mass at St. Mary’s. The celebrant was Fr. Robert Bishop, CMF, mentioned in this column before as the omnipresent Tridentine advocate in Los Angeles County. The homilist was Fr. Hugh Barbour, a larger-than-life orator and author (and a friend of Fr. Mark Borkowski) from St. Michael’s Abbey.

May Fr. Johnson’s soul rest in peace, and may Fr. Johnson pray for the Church Militant on Earth who share his love of the Traditional Latin Mass.