

# Tridentine Community News

October 19, 2008

## *Ad Oriëntem in the Ordinary Form*

If there is one visual feature of the Traditional Latin Mass that distinguishes it from the vast majority of Novus Ordo Masses, it is the *ad oriëntem* posture of the priest. For almost the entire duration of the Mass, the priest faces in the same direction as the congregation, leading the people in their prayer to God.



We have discussed the matter of *ad oriëntem* celebration before in our July 1, 2007 column, which is available on-line at the address at the bottom of this page. Since that date, the topic has attracted increasing attention, particularly with regards to being a valid option when celebrating the Novus Ordo. This awareness is largely attributable to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, having celebrated an Ordinary Form Mass in this posture in the Sistine Chapel in May. The Papal Master of Ceremonies, Msgr. Guido Marini, pointed out that the

Holy Father wished to demonstrate the historical continuity of celebrating *versus Deum* (towards God) as well as the merit of using an historic high altar.

Interestingly, the Archdiocese of Detroit might very well have more *ad oriëntem* Novus Ordo Masses than any other diocese in North America. Consider that St. Joseph, Holy Family, and Assumption Grotto churches offer most, if not all of their Masses in this fashion. Several other parishes and chapels offer Holy Mass in this position on occasion. Sweetest Heart of Mary offers its Monday noon Mass and its First Friday 6:00 PM Mass *ad oriëntem*, for example.

Special credit must be given to Holy Family Church. Virtually every Holy Mass ever offered at Holy Family has been celebrated not only *ad oriëntem*, but also in Latin! Has any other parish in North America, or even the world, been so faithful to the actual documents of Vatican II as to employ the Latin language so extensively, indeed, almost exclusively? And we are not talking about the Tridentine Mass, but the Ordinary Form.

[Adjacent photo of Holy Family Church courtesy of Anne Ruthmann Photography [www.anneruthmann.com](http://www.anneruthmann.com)]



## *Other Marks of Continuity With Tradition*

One need only look to other practices our Holy Father has been implementing over the past year to appreciate his vision that the Ordinary Form of the Mass should be more visibly rooted in the liturgical tradition of the Latin Rite of the Church. For instance:

1. Kneeling for Holy Communion has been reinstated as the norm at Papal Masses.
2. The altar arrangement has returned to the traditional style, with six evenly spaced high candles and a central crucifix to serve as a focal point for the celebrant's attention. The Holy Father also makes use of a seventh candle on the altar, to signify his office as the Sovereign Pontiff and Ordinary of the Diocese of Rome. All Ordinaries (diocesan bishops) may make use of a seventh candle.
3. The vestments he uses in Rome are of traditional style, rich with symbols. And they haven't all been dragged out of storage: The high-end design house Tridentinum has been making new vestments for the Holy Father.

These externals visibly contribute to the restoration of the sacred in the Ordinary Form Mass. Yes, they are a continuation of the Tridentine Mass norms. But as this column has argued on previous occasions, they are simply common sense. They solve some of the problems that have made the Mass too much "about us." The Mass is *not* about us; it is about worshipping almighty God. The faithful, especially those new to these practices, should be exposed to them, as well as the logic behind them.

Something else to ponder: In Poland, these traditions are not so rare. And the translation of the Novus Ordo into Polish is more faithful to the original Latin than our (original) ICEL English translation. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life in Poland have continued to be strong after Vatican II. Cause and effect, perhaps?

There is such a thing as Catholic identity. When history is written, it will be about the tenets of our Holy Faith, about popular devotions and processions, and ethnic traditions. It will not be about how self-affirming and celebratory the liturgy is.

### *Bishop Boyea Mass Rescheduled*

Due to a scheduling error, Bishop Boyea had to cancel the Tridentine Mass he had intended to celebrate at Flint's All Saints Church. That Mass has now been rescheduled for Sunday, December 7 at 4:00 PM. As before, the Assumption-Windsor Choir will provide the music for the Mass.