

Tridentine Community News

January 4, 2009

The Date of the Feast of the Epiphany

In many dioceses, the Feast of the Epiphany in the Novus Ordo calendar is transferred to the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. In the Tridentine calendar, however, Epiphany always occurs on its traditional date of January 6, which this year falls on Tuesday. Epiphany is the last day of the Twelve Days of Christmas, and therefore is the day after which many parishes take down their Christmas decorations.

There have been several questions recently about whether we will celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, January 4. The answer is no, based on the 1960 Rules on External Solemnities, the FSSP Ordo, and the recent statement by the Eclésiá Dei Commission that Tridentine feast days do not have to transfer to the Sunday just because they do in the Novus Ordo calendar. There is also no regional directive from the Bishops' Conferences of Canada or the U.S. for those who celebrate the Extraordinary Form to do so.

The Church calendar has structure, logic, and beauty. Consider that Epiphany is the start of a new Octave employing its own Preface. What sense would it make to celebrate Epiphany on January 4, then go back to a Feria on January 5 not using the Epiphany Preface, and then restart the Octave on January 6? Moving Epiphany has repercussions that moving a standalone feast such as Sacred Heart does not.

Blessing of Chalk and Epiphany Water

Another tradition for the Feast of the Epiphany is the blessing of chalk, water, and occasionally incense.

The European custom is to take the blessed chalk home and use it to write over the door of the house, 20 + C + M + B + 09, where the numbers are, of course, the year, and the letters stand for the names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. If blessed incense was also distributed, the door of the house is to be incensed at this point.

"Three Kings Water" is blessed, if time allows, with an elaborate ceremony from the *Rituále Románium*. Time limitations may dictate the use of the regular exorcism and blessing of Holy Water. Epiphany Water is then taken home and sprinkled in the rooms of the house as a protection against evil.

Bishop Boyea Mass Rescheduled Again

Bishop Earl Boyea will celebrate his first Extraordinary Form Mass as Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, Michigan on Sunday, February 15 at 4:00 PM at All Saints Church in Flint. All Saints is located one block east of I-75, at the Pierson Road exit, north of downtown Flint. The Mass will be a Pontifical Low Mass, as he was accustomed to celebrating at St. Josaphat Church. Music will be supplied by the Assumption Church-Windsor choir.

New St. Josaphat Blog Debuts

Edgar Din and his son Christopher have begun work on a blog site showcasing the Extraordinary Form liturgies at St. Josaphat. You may have noticed Edgar taking photos during Mass over the past several months for this effort. The Dins intend for this blog to be a visual essay of what goes on at St. Josaphat, complementing our web site, www.detroitlatinmass.org, and more pictorial than these columns are meant to be. Particularly noteworthy and appropriate is the header photo of Bishop Boyea delivering the homily at one of our Masses.

New Vestments and Altar Cloths

Those who attended the Christmas Midnight Mass at St. Joseph or the Christmas Day Mass at Assumption saw Fr. Peter Hrytsyk's brand-new gold vestment set. Custom-made by nuns in Toronto, this set joins the violet, white, and red sets that Fr. Peter acquired for Assumption over the past year. In addition to the usual chasuble, cope, stole, maniple, burse, and chalice veil that comprise complete vestment sets, this new gold set also includes a missal stand veil and that rarest of objects, a matching pall, or flat square cover for the chalice. Fr. Hrytsyk credits, or blames depending on your point of view, Fr. Borkowski for establishing high standards for vestments.

Assumption has also acquired a three-cloth altar cloth set. In the Extraordinary Form, it is traditional to cover the altar with three cloths, one of which extends all the way to the floor on the sides. These days, few churches possess such sets. Now both St. Josaphat and Assumption do, and future altar cloths obtained will be designed for a three-cloth configuration.

We are fortunate that we can focus on such minutia. It can take a while for Tridentine Mass communities to acquire all of the supplies they might need. Let us be reasonable and realize that the above supplies are the cherry on the whipped cream on the chocolate syrup on the ice cream. Start-up communities might take years before they think about such accessories. God may be glorified with even the most basic of supplies.

