

# Tridentine Community News

April 5, 2009

## *Biblical Content in the Tridentine Mass*

One of the most frequently-heard arguments in support of the Novus Ordo over the Tridentine Mass is based on its incorporation of a third reading in Sunday and Solemnity (First Class Feast) Masses. Proponents also point out that the Novus Ordo has a three-year cycle of readings for Sundays, and a two-year cycle for weekdays. The Tridentine Mass, in comparison, has a one-year cycle of readings, and two readings for most Masses of the year. Thus the argument is that the faithful are exposed to more Sacred Scripture over the course of three years if they attend the Novus Ordo.

The most popular counter-argument, indeed one mentioned previously in this column, is that it is better to be familiar with a one-year cycle of readings, than to be unfamiliar with a three-year set. Humans have only so much capacity to remember. Reading so much Scripture over so long a period without repetition means less will be remembered.

Today, we would like to present another fact about the Extraordinary Form Mass that is often overlooked. The Ordinary Form of the Mass, as typically celebrated in most locations in North America, makes little if any use of the Introit, Gradual, Offertory, and Communion Antiphons. The Tridentine Mass, however, consistently uses these Antiphons. In almost every instance, these Antiphons are excerpts from Sacred Scripture. Put together, these Antiphons exceed the length of the average Third Reading.

Furthermore, the Ordinary of the Tridentine Mass contains excerpts from Scripture not present in the Novus Ordo: the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar (Psalm 42), the *Lavabo* (Psalm 25), and the Last Gospel.

The average Tridentine Mass therefore employs more, not less, excerpts from Sacred Scripture than the average Novus Ordo Mass. This is even more the case during the week, since there are only two readings in the Ordinary Form on most weekdays, whereas the Tridentine Mass is not abbreviated. The Extraordinary Form is in fact a particularly Scriptural liturgy, despite claims to the contrary.

## *Musical Tie-ins to Scripture*

When planning the music for our Tridentine Masses, we take into account the Scripture passages used that day in the Propers and readings. We also consider what feast days occur in the previous or coming week. Thus, in a week with a Marian feast, we often use Marian hymn(s) on the nearest Sunday. We also pay attention to the Antiphons. For example, last Sunday, Passion Sunday, our

Communion motet was *Confitebor Tibi, Domine* by Orlando di Lassus, chosen because that was the passage of Scripture used in the Offertory Antiphon that day.

The use of music to reinforce the Propers of the day and week can help us to remember them, and the Liturgical Year, better. This same principle explains why so many of us easily recall lyrics to 1970s songs – the melodies were just too catchy. Just think of any Abba hit.

Our music program strengthens the following proposition: We submit that the average person who has been attending the Extraordinary Form of Holy Mass over a three-year period actually has more familiarity with more of the Bible than the average three-year attendee of the Ordinary Form. The annual repetition of a larger annual selection of passages reinforces memories. Which do you remember better, high school Algebra or

English? You remember what you encounter more often in daily life.

We believe that the Extraordinary Form of Mass should have an appeal not only to Catholics, but also to those Christians who value familiarity with Sacred Scripture. The Tridentine Mass can actually be a tool of evangelization to those who

may be searching for an integration of the Bible with a liturgical tradition not found in many other Christian denominations.

## *Reminder: NEXUS Cards Helpful for Border Crossers*

As an increasing number of members of the Tridentine Communities of Assumption-Windsor and St. Josaphat visit each others' churches, we wish to remind everyone of the advantages of obtaining a NEXUS card. NEXUS is a frequent-crosser program jointly administered by U.S. and Canadian Customs and Immigration authorities.

A NEXUS card gets you through the U.S. and Canadian borders quicker. If everyone in your car has a card, you may use a special NEXUS lane, where your card(s) are read electronically, and in most cases you experience a quicker processing by the border agent. There is usually no line of cars at all for the NEXUS lane.

The cost is \$50 for those 18 and older; free for those younger than 18. The card is valid for five years. Apply on-line at: [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/trusted\\_traveler/nexus\\_prog/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/trusted_traveler/nexus_prog/) A background check will be run, and then you will be called in to the NEXUS office on the U.S. side of the Ambassador Bridge to be photographed for your card (a la Driver's License) and be instructed on its use. Your total time investment is equivalent to perhaps six border crossings' worth of wait time, and from then on, you rarely wait at all.

