

# Tridentine Community News

September 20, 2009

## *Active Participation in the Mass: A Statistical Study - Part 4 of 4*

Below we conclude our count of the congregational responses made in the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of Holy Mass. Our objective is to see just how much exterior “active participation” there is on the part of the congregation. Longer responses are abbreviated to save space, as the idea is to count the responses, not to write them out in entirety. If you wish to see a complete comparison of both Mass forms, please see the series of columns we presented in early 2008, available at the web site below.

The typical sung Sunday Mass is presented, including the *Aspérages*. In some churches, the congregation makes the responses to the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar silently, and not out loud. We thus show two counts: The first number includes these responses, while the second, bracketed number does not. It must be stated that the notion of silent responses may be a new concept to those unfamiliar with the Extraordinary Form. We maintain that those are responses nonetheless, just as the priest’s silent Canon is indeed a prayer.

### Extraordinary Form/Tridentine Mass

#### THE PATER NOSTER, CONTINUED

#### THE AGNUS DEI

42. [27.] (sung) Lamb of God...

#### PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

43. [28.] Lord, I am not worthy that Thou... (3 times)

#### COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

#### THE COMMUNION ANTIPHON

#### THE POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

44. [29.] And with thy Spirit.

45. [30.] Amen.

#### THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

46. [31.] And with thy Spirit.

47. [32.] Thanks be to God.

48. [33.] Amen.

#### THE LAST GOSPEL

49. [34.] And with thy Spirit.

50. [35.] Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

51. [36.] Thanks be to God.

### Ordinary Form/Novus Ordo Mass

#### THE PATER NOSTER, CONTINUED

43. And also with you.

#### THE AGNUS DEI

44. Lamb of God...

#### PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION

45. Lord I am not worthy to receive you... (1 time)

#### COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

46. Amen.

#### THE COMMUNION ANTIPHON

#### THE POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER

47. Amen.

#### THE BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

48. And also with you.

49. Amen.

50. Thanks be to God.

### *Conclusions*

On a number-of-responses basis, with good faith allowances for the number of Responsory Psalm responses and Prayers of the Faithful, the Extraordinary Form has essentially the same number of congregational responses as the Ordinary Form. Those who believe otherwise have likely not attempted a similar exercise as this one, or may have an erroneous perception that the congregation is engaged in devotional activities during the Mass. We invite doubters to visit one of our Masses and judge for themselves.

It is said that “those who sing, pray twice.” Certainly singing is a high level of vocal participation. On a what-is-sung basis, the Asperges, Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei are always sung in the typical Sunday Tridentine Mass. In the Novus Ordo, the Asperges is rarely chosen as an option, and the Credo is rarely sung, but the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei are commonly sung. Both forms have Entrance and Recessional Hymns, plus an Offertory Hymn if the choir does not sing a piece alone at that point. The Ordinary Form typically has a Communion Hymn, but it is not commonly feasible for the congregation to participate. All things considered, there is a greater amount of congregational singing in a typical Sunday Extraordinary Form Mass than in a typical Sunday Ordinary Form Mass.

In summary, if you define “active participation” as vocal engagement, and believe that more of that makes for better liturgy, then we have a place for you: a typical Sunday Mass in the Extraordinary Form.