

Tridentine Community News

January 19, 2014 – Second Sunday After Epiphany

The Need for a New Form of Media to Evangelize the Extraordinary Form

So much has changed since the Tridentine Mass was reintroduced to the Universal Church in the wake of the 1984 Indult, *Quattuor Abhinc Annos*. Back then, word of new developments spread slowly. The Latin Liturgy Association newsletter was virtually the only mainstream source of regular information.

Fast forward to 2004, 20 years after that indult. Magazines such as *The Latin Mass* and England's *Mass of Ages* provided regular coverage of developments in the Tridentine world. Una Voce chapters started publishing their own bulletins. The web had debuted in the mid-1990s, and web sites devoted to traditional liturgy were starting to appear. Catholic Answers' Forums provided a place to ask questions about traditional Catholicism.

Skip ahead again to 2014. Powerhouse blogs have appeared: *The New Liturgical Movement* covers the academic, artistic, visual, and aesthetic aspects of traditional liturgy in both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Form. *Fr. Z's* blog provides news and doesn't shy away from controversies. *Rorate Caeli* is edgier, with an investigative journalist's approach. *The Chant Café* is the Church Music Association of America's effort to promote use of Gregorian Chant, sung Propers, and the traditional repertoire in both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms. The Latin Mass Society of England and Wales has steadily grown into the world's most active and well-organized advocacy, training, and support group for all things Tridentine, albeit focused strictly (and understandably) on their home country. Conventions like the CMAA's, the LLA, and various conferences throughout Europe serve an ever-growing, worldwide group of Latin Mass devotees.

Countless blogs have appeared that have at least a partial focus on aspects of traditional Catholicism. Indeed, the classic liturgy is far better represented on the internet than more contemporary expressions of Catholicism. Just search on Google Images for almost any saint or church name, for example, and you will see not a few Tridentine Mass photos. Whether one's taste in reading material leans towards the non-controversial or the edgy, there is content to suit your preferences. However, almost all of these media outreach efforts serve those who already have some familiarity with the Latin Mass, and that is not surprising. It has been said that the Tridentine Mass inspires commitment: Commitment to learn more about one's faith, commitment to lead one's life in a more Catholic manner, commitment to sin less and practice virtue more, and commitment to frequent Confession and Holy Mass more often. Once a person has that "Aha!" moment of discovering the riches of the traditional Catholic faith, he or she often devours everything possible to educate himself or herself.

It is only natural that a certain "Honors Class" mentality evolves from this: We've learned the basics, now let's study more about Church history, rubrics, sacred music, the Breviary, and so on. Let's debate whether we should be using the pre- or post-1955 Holy Week, or pre- or post-Solesmes Gregorian Chant. Fortunately, there's plenty of media where it's possible to read up on such topics, but as the discussions get more sophisticated, they

will appeal less to those just beginning to discover the Extraordinary Form. Yet those very newbies represent a source of growth for the future; they must not be ignored.

There is an increasing hunger from people eager for something more substantive in their faith lives. Virtually every month, our volunteers encounter newcomers to our Tridentine Masses who exclaim that they never knew that such a Mass existed in this region. At special events like the All Souls Day Mass at St. Hugo, people who would never drive to one of our downtown churches express awe and wonderment at the beauty of the liturgy. These are souls we need to reach, support, educate, and bring back.

Juventútem Michigan teaches us a similar lesson: They have enjoyed great success not only creating a community of young adults who espouse the Extraordinary Form, but also attracting others who may not have originally thought much about traditional liturgy. The latter join and participate in the group because it is a forum for meaty discussion of Catholic concepts. Many do develop an appreciation for the Latin Mass in time.

These important and recurring experiences lead to the conclusion that the time has come for a new media ministry to reach the vast number of Catholics – and potential Catholics – who know little if anything about traditional liturgy. The world of Sacred Tradition is begging to be exposed to a broader array of the faithful. There are innumerable souls out there who are vaguely dissatisfied with their experience of Catholicism in their home parishes but don't know where to turn. Even if such people only constitute 0.2% of Catholic faithful, they still represent an immense population.

Classic Catholicism needs to be presented in a non-academic, non-threatening, engaging and enticing manner, using modern presentation techniques. An effective new media venture needs to take into account today's short attention-span mindset and convey concepts quickly; this is not the place for in-depth analysis. It needs to unapologetically present the growth in popularity of the Extraordinary Form, the surge in vocations among priests and religious devoted to the Tridentine Mass, and the fact that this movement is largely being driven by young people. The presentation must be relentlessly positive; polemics are not going to reel in those hungering for substance, but beauty certainly will. This enterprise is not intended to preach to the converted; it may or may not appeal to experienced traditionalists. The focus must be on those who don't yet know the Tridentine Mass. "Extraordinary Form for Beginners", if you will.

Next week, we'll tell you about the new, locally-based effort to fill this void in Catholic media.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 01/20 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Joseph* (Ss. Fabian, Pope, & Sebastian, Martyrs)

Tue. 01/21 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Benedict/Assumption-Windsor* (St. Agnes, Virgin & Martyr)

Sun. 01/26 12:30 PM: High Mass at *Immaculate Conception, Lapeer* (Third Sunday After Epiphany)

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail info@windsorlatinmass.org. Previous columns are available at www.windsorlatinmass.org