

# Tridentine Community News

October 19, 2014 - Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

## *The Deposit of Faith*

There has been a huge amount of press coverage of the Extraordinary Synod on the Family in recent weeks. Secular media, Catholic media, and bloggers have been weighing in on their interpretation of the discussion of the Synod Fathers. This column will make no attempt to report or comment on the proceedings, however a relevant subject is to consider how the Church guards and treats its Deposit of Faith.

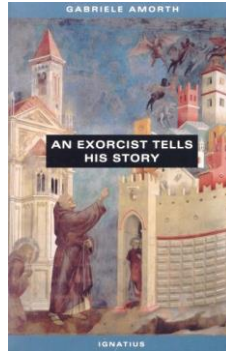
Holy Mother Church moves slowly and deliberately. The official pronouncements of the Church are written and vetted by appropriate Vatican dicasteries. Even personal responses to dubia (questions) submitted by the faithful are often reviewed by at least one other official besides the one writing the response. This careful process, which can seem frustrating at times because of the slow speed at which Rome seems to operate, is intended to ensure that casual and potentially inaccurate statements do not become perceived as official rulings.

Conversely, off-the-cuff comments by Vatican officials, up to and including the Pope, must not be seen as reflecting the official Church position on matters. This is the case even when comments seem to favor the sentiments of Traditional Catholics. For example, in 2008 the esteemed Dario Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos made a statement that Pope Benedict XVI wished for the Extraordinary Form to be offered in every parish of the world. His Eminence's statement seemed a little extreme at the time; setting aside parish politics, what would happen in parishes which are only able to offer one Mass per week? Where one priest serves multiple parishes? Logistics could make such a possibility untenable. Yet the statement had been made by the then-President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclésia Dei*, the highest ranking authority in the Church on the matter of the Tridentine Mass. History has shown that it was more likely optimistic speculation rather than fact. Certainly if Pope Benedict really wished for such a thing to happen, he could have enacted legislation to make it so, though the wisdom of doing so would have been debatable.

For this reason, Catholics must be careful only to consider as official only those statements which are issued by the Magisterium, the official congregations and departments of the Holy See which speak in a formal capacity for the Pope in union with the Bishops. Press releases and interviews with Cardinals or even the Holy Father himself are not authentic teachings. This is a key way by which the Catholic Church guards its doctrine and laws, by providing a formal process by which official pronouncements are made. We should resist the temptation to be encouraged or discouraged by what are, in essence, merely discussions and speculations.

## *Book Review: An Exorcist Tells His Story*

Fr. Gabriele Amorth served for many years as an Exorcist for the Diocese of Rome. The first of two books he has written as an account of his experiences, *An Exorcist Tells His Story*, is a valuable read for Catholics for several reasons which may not be evident from the title of the book.



For those who harbor any doubts that Satan and his minions are real, Fr. Amorth's personal experiences make it abundantly clear that demonic activity of various sorts, while relatively rare, does actually happen. Particularly when he relates any one of a number of stories of a demon who has possessed an individual, evidence such as the superhuman strength which can be exhibited by the possessed, or the knowledge which the demon, speaking through the possessed, has of situations and experiences that the possessed could not possibly know, leaves the reader with no doubts.

It is interesting to note that Fr. Amorth believes that the Extraordinary Form Ritual has a number of key advantages over the Ordinary Form Book of Blessings: First, he notes that the Rite of Exorcism had not yet [as of the date of publication of the book] been revised, thus he continued to employ the older form in Latin. [In 1999, the Church did issue an updated Rite, however the traditional form may still be used.] Second, he notes the advantages of the classic form of Baptism and blessing of Holy Water which involve exorcisms of the salt and water used. Why employ a reduced rite when the classic ones so effectively purge the dark forces?

The author is not shy in relaying his dismay at bishops who downplay the role of demons and who fail to provide sufficient exorcists for their diocese. A priest can only function as an exorcist at the delegation of his bishop, thus responsibility to provide this ministry rests solely with the episcopate.

Fr. Amorth emphasizes that living a prayerful and sacramental life is the surest defense against demonic influences. If one regularly avails oneself of Confession and Holy Communion, and makes prayer an integral part of one's day, demonic possession will most likely not occur, as the devil targets those of weaker or no faith.

While the book contains a few graphic descriptions of exorcisms, it is not a horror story and will not cause nightmares. Rather, *An Exorcist Tells His Story* is more likely to serve as a boost to one's faith, for in demonstrating that hell and its minions are real indeed, it likewise shows that in the majority of cases, demons flee when a Rite of the Church is used at an early enough stage of a person's troubles. Rarely do we see the forces of good and evil facing off in such an exposed manner, with good clearly having the upper hand. We can rest assured that God, the Creator of the Universe, is infinitely more powerful than any of His creatures, even Satan, and gives us via His Church the means to triumph.

## *Tridentine Masses This Coming Week*

Mon. 10/20 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Joseph* (St. John Cantius, Confessor)

Tue. 10/21 7:00 PM: High Requiem Mass at *St. Benedict/Assumption-Windsor* (Daily Mass for the Dead)