

Tridentine Community News

June 18, 2017 – External Solemnity of Corpus Christi

The Ambrosian Rite

Disclaimer: These are the author's initial reactions to his first experience of the Ambrosian Rite Mass and are not meant to be authoritative descriptions of the rite.

This year's Sacra Liturgia conference was held in Milan, Italy June 6-9. As always, it was an informative and uplifting experience. One feels intimately connected to the worldwide Latin Mass movement at such an event, being part of an international crowd with likeminded interests.

Vatican Congregation of Divine Worship Prefect Cardinal Robert Sarah once again delivered the keynote address, in which he reiterated his recommendation from last year for priests to celebrate the Ordinary Form of Holy Mass *ad orientem*. This year His Eminence also made the case for Holy Communion to be received kneeling and on the tongue. Cardinal Raymond Burke delivered an address about the positive effects of the first ten years of *Summorum Pontificum*. Former Apostolic Nuncio to the United States Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò was in attendance, as were several other bishops and countless priests.



A principal objective of this year's event was exposing the attendees to the Ambrosian Rite. The rite, named after Milan's Patron Saint, St. Ambrose, is native to the Archdiocese of Milan; it is also used at a handful of other locations in Italy and Switzerland. Several talks on the history of the rite were presented, and Masses and Vespers in the traditional and modern forms of the rite were offered. An elaborate Traditional Ambrosian Solemn Mass in the Presence of a Greater Prelate [Cardinal Burke] was offered in the standing-room-only Church of Sant'Alessandro in Zebedia. [Photo above; both photos by Sacra Liturgia]

Unlike the Traditional Premonstratensian, a.k.a. Norbertine, Rite, which has only a few variations from the Traditional Latin Mass, the Traditional Ambrosian Rite differs in some significant ways:

There are three readings instead of two. There are two additional chanted Propers: an Antiphon after the Gospel and a *Confractorium* Antiphon after the Canon during the breaking of the host. The *Confractorium* takes the place of the Agnus Dei, which is omitted in the Ambrosian Rite.

In both the Masses and the Vespers offered at the conference, there were elements shared with the Byzantine Rite: There were several instances of *Kyrie, eleison* chanted back and forth. There were *Dominus vobiscum*'s at unexpected points, such as before antiphons. Unlike its restrained handling in the Tridentine Mass, the thurible – without a lid – is swung around in an expansive circular motion, almost like a lasso.

Only four priests in the Archdiocese of Milan are familiar with the Traditional Ambrosian Rite. As a result, that version is only offered in two locations.

The Modern Ambrosian Rite shares many of the characteristics of the traditional version, though the celebrant may face the people. This rite is the norm in most parishes in Milan. In the Modern Ambrosian Mass offered at the conference in the Basilica of St. Ambrose, the first reading was, oddly, not taken from Sacred Scripture, but was rather a history of Ss. Ambrose, Gervase, and Protase. The Sign of Peace takes place before the Offertory.

Musically, there is a whole repertoire of Ambrosian Chant, whose sound is quite rich and full, sonically falling somewhere between the often thin Gregorian Chant and complex polyphony. Many of our readers are familiar with the Ambrosian *Glória*, which the Milanese call *Glória Tono Festivo*. An updated book of Ambrosian Chant was introduced at the conference.



Perhaps the most moving moment in all of the liturgies offered took place at the beginning of the Modern Ambrosian Rite Mass. As the entrance procession arrived at the altar, the two acolytes and crucifer turned to face the clergy behind them. The clergy and servers in the procession turned to face each other, while the celebrant remained at the back of the procession [photo above]. The choir then began a 12-fold *Kyrie*, alternating with the clergy. A video of this entrance is here, with the *Kyrie* beginning at 2:30: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8kDr4_kPIQ

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 06/19 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (St. Julia of Falconieri, Virgin)

Tue. 06/20 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Holy Name of Mary, Windsor* (St. Silverius, Pope & Martyr)

Sat. 06/24 8:30 AM: Low Mass at *Miles Christi* (Nativity of St. John the Baptist)