

VATICAN II AND THE LITURGY: REVISITING LOST TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the changes that occurred in the Catholic liturgy either by the council fathers or by over-zealous liturgists who ignored the decree of Vatican II and chose to interpret the Vatican's directives in their own way. I will examine the various parts of the mass before and after Vatican II. I will visit a traditional mass (pre-Vatican II) to determine its usefulness in today's world. I will look at past traditions swept aside post Vatican II and determine if these traditions still hold value to Catholic's today.

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INTRODUCTION

“When the Christian soul in its distress cannot find words to implore God’s mercy, it repeats ceaselessly and with a vehement faith the same invocation. Reason has reached its limit, faith alone can go further.” Jehan Alain

In 2008 I went to see the movie *Doubt* starring Meryl Streep. The movie brought back vivid memories of my Catholic upbringing and the mystical ceremonies that were once a big part of my life. Yes, I do miss the ceremonies, the songs, the feeling of closeness to God. I have realized like so many others that in trying to come to terms with a modern world, the Catholic Church lost much of what made it unique. Vatican II was Pope John XXIII’s hope for a new and revitalized Church that would merge the old with the new. He died before his dream was realized. What did happen were significant changes that would revolutionize the Church forever. Because of these changes, an unexpected bond grew between the laity and the lower clergy which alienated the upper clergy. The upper clergy took offense and were determined to keep their reigns on the church. Instead, the lower clergy together with the laity, changed the structure of the mass, discarded traditions, and branded for themselves a new Catholicism. In this paper, I will discuss the changes to the mass after Vatican II. I will argue that the Church (and laity) in its quest to come to terms with a modern world may have done away with rituals that many still hold dear. These rituals, now lost to a new generation of Catholics, are part of the uniqueness that kept many Catholics close to their faith. I will look at some of these rituals in the mass prior to Vatican II and see what the Church may have wanted to retain. I also will report on a traditional “Tridentine Mass” that I attended in order to

experience first hand the uniqueness of a traditional mass and compare it to the mass that Catholics typically attend today. I will try to determine if aspects of the traditional mass hold anything for Catholics in the 21st Century and if some older rituals still hold a purpose for Catholics in our modern world.

THE TRIDENTINE MASS

If one could go back in time and attend a Catholic mass in 1960 one would hardly recognize the mass as being Catholic. And yet, the traditional Catholic Latin mass was the norm for almost 400 years. In fact, the central part of the mass can be traced back to the 6th century and St. Gregory. The Council of Trent was the Catholic Church's 16th Century ecumenical council in response to the Protestant reformation. It convened in the city of Trent, Italy from 1545 to 1563. Major reforms that occurred were dogmas and degrees issued in all aspects of the Catholic faith from the sacraments to prayers. The *tridentine* or traditional Latin mass was codified by Pope St. Pius V in 1570 in response to a directive from the Council of Trent. He revised the Roman missal used during the mass and dismissed all rites that were not 200 years or older. This missal became the written word on the protocols of the mass and only a pope could make future changes. And many did! Pius himself expunged many holy days devoted to saints. His successor, Pope Clement VIII restored these saints to their holy days and revised other aspects of the missal. What aspects of this codified mass made it unique?

First of all, when entering a church through the vestibule, a person would dip his hand in holy water, make the sign of the cross, genuflect in homage to the Lord and quietly go to his or her seat. Throughout the mass there were sixteen genuflections in honor of the Lord. The atmosphere was peaceful, with all emphasis in paying homage

and respect to God. One would only whisper out of necessity. The feeling was that you were in God's house. Out of respect, one would only wear their best to church. (Cekada, 2007)

The priest would stand at the bottom of the altar which was elevated so that all may see it. He would then say a prayer, *introibo ad altare dei*, that he would be worthy to ascend the three steps to the altar. "In mounting the altar steps the priest was being brought "unto thy holy mount, and into thy tabernacles." These are the words of psalms from the Hebrew Bible, and they go with an extraordinary insistence on using the language of ancient Jewish sacrifice -- a holy victim, a pure and unblemished sacrifice." (Casey) The sacrifice was that of Jesus, the son of God, who gave up his life for mankind. The climax of the mass was the consecration of the host. The consecration took place when the priest said the prayers from the Last Supper at which time the host became the body and blood of Christ. The consecrated host could only be held by the priest who distributed it to the congregation by placing it on their tongues. There was a real sense that something powerful and spiritual had happened during the consecration. One would never receive the sacrament of Holy Eucharist without first making a good act of contrition or penance for one's sins. (Cekada, 2007)

The majority of prayers in a *Tridentine* mass date back to 300 and 400 A.D. The canon (writings that are recognized as authoritative) are essentially the same ones used by St. Ambrose (one of the four Doctors of the Church) around 397 A.D. The prayer, *Introibo ad altare Dei*, is from Psalm 23 and literally means I will go to the altar of God. This psalm is attributed to David when he was just a youth. Psalms are used in the traditional mass to correspond with its various parts. Psalm 43 is particularly useful at

the beginning of mass as it evokes trust and strength in the Lord. One of the most important prayers in the mass is the Confiteor. The Confiteor is an ancient prayer where one confesses to God his sinfulness and begs for pardon. This prayer dates back to the 8th century. The priest not only confesses to God but admits his guilt to the saints and implores them to pray for his forgiveness. After the Confiteor, parts of David's Psalm 84 are read which harken the coming of the Messiah or Savior. This is the part of the mass leading up to the consecration of the host. (Catholic Online, 2010)

The Old Testament readings were an essential part of the *Tridentine* Mass. They are important because they tell us something about God and how he wants us to lead our lives. The beautifully written stories are meant to provide valuable lessons and morals for Catholics. The Old Testament is also the precursor to the New Testament. The "study of the Old Testament is an essential foundation for understanding the New Testament. These books of history, poetry, wisdom, and prophecy comprise the first 39 books of the Bible. A study of the Old Testament is an imperative foundation for clarity of both Old and New Testament Bible teaching. It will enrich a believer's knowledge and life and make for better teaching to the glory of God." (Schultz, p. 7)

Music was an important part of the *Tridentine* mass especially during a High Mass where the priest sings most parts of the mass. An organ was the principal instrument and could be found in almost every Church prior to Vatican II. Gregorian chants and traditional hymns were common and added a beautiful element to the mass.

There can be no denying that imagery played an important part in all aspects of the Catholic faith. However, the one place where imagery played a crucial role was at Church during mass. Beautiful architecture, artwork, statues, and vestments were eye

candy for Catholic worshippers. During religious holidays it was common to walk into a Catholic Church and smell incense. Organ music and chanting were another aspect of the imagery that was unique, mystical, and spiritual to the Catholic Church. Also, incense used to purify and sanctify, created another element of mysticism during the mass. “The usage of incense adds a sense of solemnity and mystery to the Mass. The visual imagery of the smoke and the smell remind us of the transcendence of the Mass which links heaven with earth, and allow us to enter into the presence of God.” (Saunders, 2004)

The most unique facet of a *Tridentine* mass was the Latin language. Almost all of the prayers, responses, and chants were in Latin. An exception was the gospel readings which were said in the vernacular.

VISITING A TRADITIONAL MASS

On May 22, I visited the Mater Ecclesia Roman Catholic Church in Berlin, New Jersey. Bishop Di Marzio, of the Camden Diocese, established this Church in 2000 in celebration of the anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima. The Church was established for the sole purpose of administering the Latin mass and sacraments to those who want to celebrate as dictated in the Roman Missal of 1962. I wondered what I would feel, if anything, toward this mass that I had vague memories of as a child.

I arrived at Mater Ecclesia a good half-hour before the mass was scheduled to begin. When I entered the Church my first reaction was of the church’s inner beauty and peacefulness. The church was entirely lighted by candles. Statues of saints abounded the corners and side aisles. On the walls of the aisles were depictions of Christ’s suffering and crucifixion. There were even pictures of saints on the ceiling. The altar table faced forward toward a life-sized crucifixion. There was a gated railing and kneelers that

separated the sanctuary from the laity. The organ was at the back of the Church. Overall, the experience was spiritual. When the parishioners began to arrive they were very quiet. There was complete silence. People were either meditating or praying. On a side aisle a green light signaled that confessions were being heard. Many lit candle offerings.

About five minutes prior to mass, the priest came out and prepared the altar. More candles were lit and the electric lights were turned on. Mass began shortly thereafter. The priest was accompanied by another priest who served as his altar boy. He faced the altar and immediately started to recite prayers in Latin. “Asperges Me, Domine, Hyssopo, et mundabor: lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.” (Latin-English Booklet Missal, p. 9) I was lost!!! I picked up a missal booklet in front of me with the English translation, “Thou Shalt Sprinkle Me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall become whiter than snow.” (Ibid, 9) By the time I found the translation the priest was already two pages ahead of me. I quickly became frustrated. The gospel was read in Latin and then in English. I suppose this was because it is the most important reading in the mass. As I looked around the parishioners appeared expressionless. They seemed to be in a trance or a time warp. Some were even dressed as though it were 1963. I definitely wasn’t feeling good about this experience.

I think what made it worse was that when the priest gave his homely it was more like a protest against progressive politicians. He asked his congregation to oppose politicians in favor of abortion. After the homely petitions are read aloud asking God to grant pleas which are important to either a particular parish or Catholics in general. For instance, one common petition is for God to grant world peace. Petitions in a Catholic mass today are read aloud by the lector. At this mass the priest read the petitions. One

petition implored that all the Muslims be converted to the true faith. I was appalled. It was obvious that this priest was using his position to advance the Catholic Church's political views.

Soon Communion was served. The parishioners knelt across the altar railings while the priest placed a host on their tongues. Altar railings used to separate the laity from the sanctuary were a common feature in a Catholic church prior to Vatican II. The sanctuary represented heaven to which no one is guaranteed entrance. Only priests and altar servers were allowed beyond the gate in the sanctuary. Altar railings were also used so that the communicants could kneel to receive the Holy Eucharist. (Altar Rails, 2010)

I felt disillusioned and sorry that the experience didn't live up to my childhood memories. I planned to go back another time. I didn't want to base my conclusion on one visit. I needed to know if this mass really held something important for 21st century Catholics or did it need to be shelved as an ancient useless ritual. What are the differences between the new and the old? And what were others saying about the mass of the past versus today's mass?

JOHN XXIII AND VATICAN II

Councils are usually convened in times of trouble. The early 1960's saw the world traumatized by the prospect of nuclear war. Pope John felt that dehumanization was widespread due to materialistic atheism, capitalism, and global poverty. He reasoned that these evils were the result of "secularization, the attempt to construct a society without God." (Callam, p. 1) In his bull, *Humane salutis*, Pope John announced his intention for a council, in which he hoped to bring Jesus' message of salvation once again to humankind.

The Catholic Church presents itself to our eyes as clothed with a greatly changed and more perfect form: evidencing a firmer unity of structure, developed by the help of a richer doctrine and more beautifully resplendent with the brightness of sanctity, so that she stands forth completely prepared to fight the holy battles of the faith. (*Humane salutis*) (Callam)

Pope John was convinced that the world respected the Catholic Church and that the recommendations of the council would truly make a difference restoring the world to order and trust in God. “The Church has achieved so lofty a pinnacle of prestige that her solemn pronouncements are treated with the highest respect by all prudent men, who regard her as a spokesman and defender for morality and a vindicator of the rights and duties of individuals and of nations.” (*Humane salutis*) (Ibid)

In his book, *What Happened at Vatican II*, John O’Malley describes Pope John’s announcement as positive. He stresses that previous popes had continuously presented a negative message to the world, all doom and gloom. One such Pope was Pius X (1903-1914) who opposed modernists and their views. Almost all of his encyclicals were condemnations of modern society. In his encyclical dated July 28, 1906 he entreats his brethren to help him preserve his flock. “We pass each day with great solicitude in preserving as much as possible the faithful from the dangerous evils that afflict society at the present time.” (Sarto, *Pieni L’Animo* (On The Clergy in Italy), 28) Three years later in another encyclical dated 21st. of April 1909, Pius again addresses his brethren lamenting, “For you are aware, venerable brethren, and you have often lamented it with Us, how evil are the days on which we have fallen, and how iniquitous the conditions which have been forced upon Us.” (Sarto, 1909) Pius X wasn’t the only pope condemning the ills of society. Pius XII (1939-1958) issued similar encyclicals. In his encyclical, “*Le Pelerinage de Lourdes*”, Pius warns against materialism; “But the world,

which today affords so many justifiable reasons for pride and hopes, is also undergoing a terrible temptation to materialism which has been denounced by Our Predecessors and Ourselves on many occasions.” (Pacelli, 1957) Pope John’s message was different. He wanted the council to take on his positive approach in the upcoming months. “In his diary for January 20, he said he intended the council as an invitation to spiritual renewal for the church and for the world.” (O’Malley, p. 18) This entry in his diary is significant not only because of its uplifting outlook for Catholics also because it shows John’s renewal extended to other Christian communities as well.

In May of 1959 preparations for the upcoming council began. Letters were sent out to bishops, world-wide, asking their opinions regarding relevant issues that needed to be addressed. Opinions were asked of institutes of higher learning in Rome and around the world. Of the 2,598 ecclesiastics that received letters, 77% responded. Overall, their responses showed that: they wanted a tightening of the status quo, they condemned the evils of the modern world, they wanted further definitions of the doctrines especially concerning the Virgin Mary, there were concerns over Communion, the laity wanted greater responsibility, and a few asked for the abrogation of celibacy for priests.

Vatican II officially convened on October 11, 1962. Liturgical reform was one of the first issues discussed. Cardinal Larrona, president of the Liturgical Commission addressed the council citing two general points he wished to cover. First, that liturgical reform in texts and rites was needed “to accommodate them to the ethos and needs of our day.” (O’Malley, p. 130) Second, he thought that “the faithful had become mute spectators at Mass instead of active participants in the liturgical action.”(O’Malley, p. 130) On November 29, 1964, the Vatican began to implement changes in the Catholic

mass. A week later, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy was issued.

The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved. For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Section 50).

The liturgical celebration was divided into eight groups: general principals, the Eucharistic Mystery (the Mass), Sacraments, Liturgical hours (Divine Office), the liturgical year, liturgical furnishings, sacred music, and sacred art. John XXIII and the council were convinced that a re-tooling of the Liturgy would lead to a better Christian life for all Catholics and would promote a better union with Protestants, the “separated brethren”. (O'Malley, p. 131) What they didn't foresee was that the majority of the discussion of the Liturgy would revolve around the use of the vernacular.

Most agreed that a change was needed from viewing the mass as Christ's passion, resurrection, and glorification. The council wanted the liturgy to become nourishment for all God's children, both men and women. Active participation was one way that people could strive to become holy. “Such participation was the right and duty of every Christian. It was demanded by the very nature of the Liturgy and was conferred upon the faithful by virtue of their baptism.” (O'Malley, p. 132)

Over the next seven years, Pope John XXIII successor, Paul VI would personally oversee changes resulting in the 1969 version of the mass, *Novus Ordo*, the missal that is still used today.

Changes in the Ordinary of the Mass: (the ordinary is the part of the mass that stayed constant throughout history)

The mass prior to Vatican II was divided into two parts; the Mass of the Catechumens and the Mass of the Faithful. The council changed the structure so that it would have four parts; the Initial Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rites. It shortened the prayers during the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Canon. These prayers once spoken inaudibly by the priest would now be said aloud so all could hear. Communion was changed to allow reception under both species; both bread and wine and the Sign of Peace were introduced. The number of Bible readings was increased due to a new 3 year cycle on Sundays and a 2 year cycle on weekends.

The use of the vernacular was the most debated issue of the council. Many bishops opposed the use of the vernacular including Spellman of New York and McIntyre of Los Angeles. Spellman advised caution whereas McIntyre wanted the mass to be left alone. Many believed that to worship in the vernacular was to worship like Protestants. Meanwhile, new bishops from places such as Indonesia and Japan held press conferences promoting the use of the vernacular. On October 24, the Patriarch of the Holy Synod, Maximos IV spoke before the council in French.

The almost absolute value assigned to Latin in the liturgy, in teaching, and in the administration of the Latin church strikes us from the Eastern church as strange (assez anormal). Christ after all spoke the language of his contemporaries... In the East there has never been a problem about the proper liturgical language. All languages are liturgical, as the Psalmist says, "Praise the Lord, all ye people." ...The Latin language is dead. But the Church is living, and its language, the vehicle of the grace of the Holy Spirit, must also be living because it is intended for us human beings not for angels. (O'Malley, p. 136)

A statement regarding the use of the vernacular was issued. In essence, it stated that the mass was to be said in the vernacular only when it added an advantage to blessings, certain prayers, readings, and directives. Judgment to use the vernacular was granted to the bishops. They could vote by a 2/3 majority to use the vernacular exclusively, and that's exactly what they did!

Directives were given concerning the re-positioning of the tabernacle. (A locked home for storing the Eucharist). Again, the bishops were allowed to decide where the tabernacle would be placed. Some decided to set it off to the side and other's placed the tabernacle completely off of the altar in a sanctuary. Altars were turned around so that the priest now faced the people. The significance was that the mass was now a community celebration. Many previously were annoyed that the priest had his back to the people, but actually, the priest was facing the tabernacle and acting as a shepherd who leads his flock. More significant was the fact that the priest was facing east. All altars from biblical times forward faced the east. "And behold the glory of the God of Israel came in by the way of the east...And the majesty of the Lord went into the temple by the way of the gate that looked to the east. And the Sprit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court, and behold the house was filled with the glory of the Lord" (Ezechiel 43). Again, the liturgical experts took it upon themselves to reposition the altar. Father Fabian Dugan at the Lumen Christi Priory says that this made more sense than the current arrangement. The priest before would start at the bottom and lead his flock upwards toward God. "He moved, as the rubrics directed, to various points of the altar and sanctuary, for the most part facing the Lord and turning to face the people when addressing them. It made sense." (Duggan, p. 20) Father Duggan believes now the priest

is more fixed; almost like a commentator or a newscaster. Along with the change in the altars, the communion rails disappeared. Communion would now be distributed to a standing congregation rather than a kneeling one. The overall purpose of these changes was to have the laity as active participants.

SCHOLARS DEBATE VATICAN II AND ITS GOOFS!

The first question that scholars ask relating to the mass is, what is the mass suppose to represent or what is its purpose? Is the mass a celebration or a sacrifice? In his article, “Forty Years and Counting”, Frank C. Quinn, O.P. definitely feels the mass is and should be a celebration of the paschal mystery for all. He says that “liturgy is not the preserve of a cultic priesthood that prays for sinners who worship at the shrine. Rather, liturgy is the celebration of the church gathered, led by leaders who pray with the community and enable the prayer life of the assembly.” (Quinn O.P., p. 4) He stresses that the celebration should never be about one but about all. In this sense, he feels that Vatican II did a good job.

On the other hand, Robert Taft, emeritus professor of Oriental liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, feels that we must *Return to Our Roots*. He says the mass was a sign of Jesus’s saving ministry at work which in turn lead to the seven sacraments. He does credit the council in giving the liturgy back to the people but emphasizes that “overly creative liturgies” (Taft, p. 11) were among the many abuses that came about in the reform. His article points out the differences in the mass liturgy in the Church of the East and West after the reform. He emphatically believes that the West might learn something from the East. The East movement “drew inspiration from contacts with the Orthodox of the Russian emigration who had found refuge in France in

the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.” (Taft, p. 11) He quotes Dom Olivier Rousseau, O.S. B. (1898-1984) a historian of the liturgical movement. Rousseau explained that “the Orthodox Church has preserved the liturgical spirit of the early church, and continues to live by this spirit, to drink from it as from its purest source.... this church has never departed in its piety and its offices form the liturgical spirit of the early church, to which it has always remained faithful.” (Taft, p. 11) Taft points out that the one consistent stable of the liturgy of the East is its familiarity and repetitiveness. He says that people who meet to worship need “regularity and consistency in their prayer, which is why people object to having their worship changed every time their pastor reads a new article.” (Taft, p. 11) His article sites other areas where he feels Vatican II failed. They include the changing of the rites; by that he means the order in which one receives the sacraments. For instance, the sacrament of penance was initially intended to be an act of repentance for grave sinners. Now, it has become one of the initiation rites into the Catholic community in the West. The mass of today focuses on the resurrection of Christ rather than His sacrifice.

Taft mentions the Liturgy of the Hours as an important part of worship which has been reduced to a small book of prayers. The Liturgy of the Hours are psalms, hymns and readings recited by priests, deacons, and laity that can be traced back to the earliest times of the Church. Its roots are derived from the Jewish communities who recited prayers during certain hours of the day. Vatican II reduced the number of daily prayers and made them mandatory only for priests. However, the laity was encouraged to participate. Taft says that the in debating the usefulness of the Liturgy of the Hours the commission looked at its usage during the Medieval period, a time of imperfection in the

clergy. Instead, they should have looked at its earliest roots and Eastern tradition. Thus, “in the East the Liturgy of the Hours has remained what it was meant to be, an integral part of the worship of God’s people. Here too the West has lost its balance, reducing the Divine Office to the prayer of clergy and monastics.” (Taft, p. 12)

Romano Taommasi, who has a graduate degree in liturgy from St. Anselmo in Rome, wrote an article in the *Latin Magazine* debunking the so called restored Roman rites by the council. They are the “Prayer of the Faithful” and the “Sign of Peace”. The Concilium of Vatican II claimed that these two prayers were ancient, dating back to the early 1st century Church. The Concilium also claimed that for some un-known reasons these two prayers fell by the wayside. In debating the use of the Prayer of the Faithful, the Concilium made reference to St. Justin Martyr. Justin wrote about second century non-Romans using Greek language and practices. Taommasi points out that this has nothing to do with Roman rites. Taommasi says the real problem is;

The modern Roman Rite is said to have been restored to the “Tradition of the Fathers” by the New Roman Missal, which period is none other than the time dating from the fourth to the seventh centuries. What does a second century practice have to do with the Roman Rite, since it did not begin to exist until around circa 380 A.D., beginning with the translation of the Mass into Latin and the sole use of the Roman Canon? The document does not concern itself with this point. (Taommasi, p. 1)

An even more compelling argument against this prayer is that it was a prayer dating back to the Greeks and was not a Roman rite used by early Christians.

The second rite restored by the Concilium was the sign of peace. The Concilium claimed that this ritual dated back to the 1st Century. Taommasi debunks this claim too! The sign of peace is that of love and community. In the early Church the customs surrounding the sign of peace were quite different than today.

Lost are the days of the sixth century Roman Rite where everyone but baptized and grace-filled orthodox Catholics are herded out of the Church following the Mass of the Catechumens. Gone, too, are the patristic prohibitions of men and women sitting together in the congregation and only exchanging peace among their own gender (still practiced in Judaism and by some Orientals). These universal practices from at least the third to the eighth centuries are all intimately bound up with the kiss of peace, which is to be pure and holy. The so-called “restoration,” purported to have been accomplished by the Consilium, reintroduced only a handshake and a smile. This is a result of the “lack of context” being achieved on the part of the Consilium. Ultimately, it must be admitted frankly that the Sign of Peace in the Novus Ordo is a meaningless liturgical gesture.” (Taommasi, p. 1)

Another area that changed after Vatican II was the distribution of Holy Communion. It would have been unthinkable to distribute hosts already consecrated at previous masses but that is exactly what happened in the West. The consecrated communion is a gift from God to us. During the mass we give gifts to God which he accepts and then He gives us his gift. Taft says “a communion form the tabernacle is like inviting guests to a banquet, then preparing and eating it oneself, while serving one’s guests the leftovers from a previous meal.” (Taft, p. 13) Again, Taft points out that Western Catholics looked to the medieval traditions instead of looking at their roots where the real tradition lied. He emphasizes that Catholics do have great, beautiful, traditions but after Vatican II they wanted something new and in trying to find that newness lost something rich and beautiful. Taft is not suggesting that Western Catholics imitate Eastern Catholics. He believes that they need to return to their Latin Christian rites. He says that “Latin Christianity is just as apostolic, ancient, traditional, patristic, spiritual and monastic as that of the East.” (Taft, p. 11)

Andrew Greeley, in the “The Catholic Revolution”, argues that after Vatican II the laity decided to write their own version of Catholicism. The climate in the West was ripe for revolution. Women would no longer be told what they could do with their bodies

by the Church or anyone else. Many Catholic women sought illegal abortion rather than have an unwanted child. The plea for birth control change was ignored by the Pope and so it was the Vatican that opened the doors for this revolution. Western Catholics no longer would allow the Church to dictate to them what they could or couldn't do. The lower clergy actually bolstered this attitude by siding with the laity. Parishioners would go to their local priest and tell them their stories of hardship. The priests would be sympathetic but could offer no redemption.

At this same time laity councils began to take root in the church, especially in the United States. Organizations such as, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Holy Name Society, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Daughters of America are but a few that operated throughout the Catholic Church. Because of these organizations, the council at Vatican II decided to affirm what role the laity had in the Church.

The schema affirmed that the laity had an apostolate in the church, which had its sacramental basis in their baptism and confirmation. The laity thus participated in the "royal priesthood of Christ and in his mission". To be truly effective the laity needed training and spiritual formation. They carried out their apostolate individually or by membership in organizations. Their apostolate had two aspects: working to help others for their progress toward God; and working to bring justice and love into their milieus. The final chapter recommended that especially in that second task the laity collaborates with other Christians and with all person of good will. (O'Malley, p. 230)

The Schema wasn't really debated all that much. One cardinal wanted a provision put in place that demanded the laity obey their parish priest. Another cardinal, Stjepan Bauerlein of Syrmia, Croatia, said that the most important role of the laity was to beget children and went so far as to blame the shortage of priests on the low birthrate of Catholic families. Finally, a layman, Patrick Keegan of the World Federation of Christian Workers, praised the schema as a "first step in forging a bond between the

hierarchy and the laity in the one mission of the church and in initiating a family dialogue between them.” (O'Malley, p. 230) Little did the Vatican know that this schema would help stir the laity to cook their own version of Catholicism. They would start to demand a say in their religion and how they would worship. Soon, laity councils began deciding parish issues and protocol for mass in their own parishes. The schema's ambiguity left the laity to interpret it whatever way they wished. They felt they were being told to take charge of their religion.

William Sewell, Jr. is a social historical analyst from the University of Chicago. He says that sometimes events or a series of sequence occurrences can result in the transformation of structures. He gives us an example in the Storming of the Bastille in July of 1789. This one event leads to the revolution which had an impact on Europe till 1815 and beyond. “The important point in Sewell's analysis is that the storming of the Bastille once interpreted as a revolutionary, momentous event, shattered and eventually replaced the social, political and religious structures of France.” (Greeley, p. 49)

Sewell thinks Vatican II was such an event. Prior to Vatican II, the authority structure flowed downward, the church's primary goal was the salvation of souls, and the church had not, could not and would not change. All of this was re-enforced by papal infallibility. In 1962, Pope John made some changes that empowered the laity. He approved changes in the Liturgy of the Holy Week; he sanctioned birth control via the rhythm method; and allowed a more modern study of the Bible. The lower clergy became sensitized to the needs of its parishioners. All of this became, “in Sewell's terms, the resources for new structures.” (Greeley, p. 51)

Greeley names five crucial changes that he says transformed the structures of the

preconciliar Church. One of these is the Liturgy. In 1965, for the first time in at least a thousand years, the priest said Mass facing the congregation, and he said it partially (soon totally) in English. (Greeley, p. 54) His point is that if the Church could discard of the Latin mass so easily, than the whole structure of the Church could change.

Greeley notes that there has never been a survey on the effects and reaction of the laity to liturgical reform. Liturgists feel they know everything there is about Liturgy. They are steadfast in their opinions and feel no need for future change. They really don't care what the laity wants in regards to worship. Greeley says that "thirty-five years after the end of the Vatican Council, only 18 percent of Catholic laity rates their clergy as "excellent" on preaching. Only a quarter rate worship as "excellent. (Greeley, p. 183) He goes on further to state that most find the mass boring and that the Pope feels the mass should be entertaining. So what is the solution? Is returning to the traditional mass the answer? Greeley feels that that the Church needs to look to its laity for answers. The Church needs to understand what affects the lives of each of its people. "The cute ideologies of the Prayers over the People won't cut it because none of these exercises in talking to ourselves touches the lives of the people whose kids are in our school or who live down the street or sit in our pews with weary masks on their faces." (Greeley, p. 188) It is only when the clergy studies the life experiences of its people that a more spiritual, moving, and creative liturgy can be realized.

Many theologians and historians ponder just how much of the post conciliar liturgical reform can be traced back to Sacrosanctum Concilium. (Vatican II) In his article, "True Development of the Liturgy", Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith tried to answer this question. Ranjith looks at the society's climate during the Vatican II era. He says

that “Society’s fascination with an exaggerated sense of individual freedom and its penchant for the rejection of anything permanent, absolute, or otherworldly had its influence on the Church and often was justified in the name of the council” (Ranjith, p. 16) He feels that Vatican II schemas especially those concerning the liturgy were too vague leaving the door open for various interpretations.

“Worse still, some practices that Sacrosanctum Concilium had never contemplated were allowed into the liturgy, such as saying the Mass versus populum, Holy Communion on the hand, altogether giving up on Latin and Gregorian Chant in favor of vernacular and songs and hymns without much space for God, and extension beyond any reasonable limits of the faculty to concelebrate at Holy Mass. There was also a gross misinterpretation of the principle of “active participation””. (Ranjith, pp. 17-18)

His views are backed by Pope Benedict who feels that the problems of the church were caused by the “disintegration of the liturgy”. (Ranjith, p. 17) The Pope also holds the view that one can no longer see Christ in the liturgy which he believes is a powerful tool in spreading spiritual essence throughout the community. He sees the community without Christ as materialistic and selfish! The Pope also believes that the true essence of Vatican II never materialized. Because of his belief in the necessity of the Latin mass, Pope Benedict issued a Motu Proprio of the Supreme Pontiff on July 7, 2007. A motu proprio is a document issued only by the Pope, on his authority alone, arising out of a necessity for the well-being of the Church. This document restored the traditional Latin mass as one of the two approved forms of the mass.

IMAGERY, LOST TRADITIONS, AND RITUALS

Many feel that rituals can enhance our experience with God. Do we yearn for rituals of the past because of nostalgia or because it represents and signifies a greater presence of God? Many are certain that it is the latter. Catholics have one of the most

extensive collection of images and metaphors of any of the world religions. Has the Catholic Church abandoned its tradition of imagery? Are the massive beautiful, stained-glassed, saint-infused, magnificent churches a thing of the past? Many churches are being torn down only to be replaced by plain-modern buildings that have no feeling of spirituality let alone the presence of God. Andrew Greeley describes the modern church as one that “looks not like a Catholic but like a Quaker meeting hall.” (Greeley, p. 116) In my research, I found that what Greeley said was not always the case. Some dioceses are embracing their history and tradition and are actually restoring their churches.

The Bulletin of Philadelphia, September 16, 2010 reported the sad story, *History Being Lost as Philly's Churches Disappear*, of the Church of the Assumption. The Assumption is one of the most historical churches in the country. As reported by Thom Nickels,

The church stands today as a ‘deconsecrated’ shell of its former self, stripped of interior altars and iconography when a dwindling congregation of about 20 people forced the Archdiocese to sell the building almost 15 years ago. Assumption’s legendary past-Saint John Neumann helped consecrate the church and Saint Katherine Drexel was baptized there-parallels its architectural value: the church was designed by Patrick Charles Keely (1816-1896), a prolific ecclesial architect of the 19th century. Keely, who designed some 600 churches in North America, also designed Saint John the Baptist in Manayunk, a parish that has not been closed. Assumption is the oldest surviving Keely church structure in the United States. (Nickels, 2010)

Sadly, as of the writing the church was scheduled for demolition to make way for a parking lot. Who is responsible for this terrible deed? One might think it was the owner who bought the property from the diocese fifteen years ago with a promise to use it as a wellness center. However, one must fault the diocese itself for selling the historic church in the first place. Similar incidents are happening in the Ohio and Massachusetts

dioceses. Local city councils are trying to preserve churches by naming them historic only to be sued by the dioceses who want to close or sell the churches.

Another area that was a foundation of tradition and beauty in the Catholic Church was music, namely, the use of Gregorian chant. “The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy: therefore, other things being equal, it should be given pride of place in liturgical services” (Fathers, 1963) Chanting is one of the oldest forms of music known to man. Plain chant has its origins at the beginning of the Catholic Church. “Hymns held a place in Catholic worship from the beginning of the Church. Christ and the apostles at the first celebration of the Most Holy Sacrament concluded therewith: “and a hymn being said, they went out unto Mount Olivet.” Matthew 26:30.” (Chant Gregorian/History, 2009) It is told that St. Ignatius (100 AD) having heard a choir of angels singing praise to the Holy Trinity, developed what is now called a antiphon, Greek for, opposite voice.

Almost three hundred years later, St Ambrose developed the style of chant by establishing its four authentic modes. Then around 590 AD, St. Gregory, a monk who became pope, published The Antiphonary, a book of songs, hymns and chant. Rightfully, “Pope Gregory insisted that music in the Church provide only a background for the Sacrifice of the Mass, assisting the faithful in profound reverence to God, but not drawing attention to itself.” (Chant Gregorian/History, 2009) After Vatican II, Gregorian chant all but disappeared from the mass and was replaced in many cases by guitar music. Then in the 1980’s, Gregorian chant became an international recording sensation. Greeley’s explanation; “When everyone else discovers something, the Catholic Church has just abandoned it.” (Greeley, p. 116)

Thomas Day, a professor of music at Salve Regina University in Newport, R.I. agrees with Greeley. "Chant is a symbol of people putting aside fad, fashion and even the ego-boosting pleasure of personal expression in order to open their hearts to God's grace." (Day, p. 10) He wonders why Gregorian chant was suppressed after Vatican II when the official liturgical books issued after Vatican II still include items from the old liturgy as an option. Greeley feels that the Church needs to get back to its two greatest resources; the imagination tradition and the spirituality of the lay-folk that correlates to that tradition. (Greeley, 118) "A typical parish should be exuberant and celebratory in its rituals, all of its rituals, from blessing a medal to the Mass." Catholics despite their disagreements with the Vatican say they like being Catholic. "They like being Catholic because of the metaphors, the images, and the stories. The Catholic imagination not only keeps them in the Church, it affects their lives, more perhaps than doctrinal prose." (Greeley, 119)

Very rightly the fine arts are considered to rank among the noblest activities of man's genius, and this applies especially to religious art and to its highest achievement, which is sacred art. These arts, by their very nature, are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God which they attempt in some way to portray by the work of human hands; they achieve their purpose of redounding to God's praise and glory in proportion as they are directed the more exclusively to the single aim of turning men's minds devoutly toward God. (Fathers, 1963)

It has been a long time since the Church patronized the arts. The beautiful work in the Sistine Chapel, the Pieta, and Notre Dame Cathedral were all done by artists under the patronage of the Church. The Church no longer wants to spend money or patronize the arts. In fact, in most churches many of the old statues were taken out of the church and stored in the basements. One cannot begin to wonder why, but Andrew Greeley

believes that the Catholic Church has now adopted the view that “a church is only in good taste when it looks like a Protestant Church.” (Greeley, p. 116)

The literary editor of U.S. Catholic magazine did an article in January of 2004 entitled, *How great thou art*. The article was an analysis of a survey done by the magazine on the importance of art in spirituality and worship. Nearly all that responded to the surveyed viewed art as important to their spirituality and 96% responded that art was instrumental in bringing them closer to God. There were differences in what kind of art (taste) was most influential. Many weren't offended by the new contemporary churches with their lack of color and objects but just as many missed the marble statues, stained glassed windows, and other religious art. “When a church is pared down to the basics, some Catholics think it's also been stripped of its vibrancy and vitality.” (Abood, p. 29) One responder mourned his newly remodeled church as going from “classic and traditional to factory modern.” (Abood, p. 29) Shirley Morris of Cedar Rapids, Iowa blames the church architects and liturgists. She thinks they've become too focused on the congregation and have “lost sight of the mystery, majesty, and awesomeness of God. Our churches have become sterile auditoriums in the process.” (Abood, p. 29)

Eighty-eight percent of readers listed music as the religious art form that moved them the most. Many felt that contemporary music just didn't do it for them but longed for the familiar hymns and even listed Gregorian chant as a favorite.

Clearly, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* indicates that the Vatican fathers had no intention that sacred music or art be eliminated in churches. Unfortunately, many parish priests along with their parishioners decided to do away with the old and modernize everything concerning the mass. From my research I'm convinced that most

of the local priests and their laity never even bothered to read the Constitution. They decided for themselves that if it was alright to change one thing, then anything and everything else could change. It was the perfect domino effect. Andrew Greeley in his book, "The Catholic Revolution" describes this rejection of the Catholic tradition as "the stripping of altars". (Greeley, p. 82) He believes it happened because "the post-revolutionary chaos in the Church made it easy for some of those in various powerful movements-ecumenical, liturgical, educational, and, later, feminist- to take control of the direction of change in their own areas of concern and impose their views on many parishes." (Greeley, p. 83) It is surprising that very few objected. At that time no one seemed to realize that the Catholic tradition was being displaced by what theologian Robert Barron calls "'beige Catholicism," the colorless, odorless, tasteless, unimaginative, unpoetic variety of Catholicism." (Greeley, p. 84)

Do Catholics need artistic inspiration? Clearly, yes they do according to the survey from U.S. Catholic magazine. Catholics are not alone in being inspired by the arts but they have long patronized the arts and used the arts in their worship of God. "Catholics love to be inspired by art of many forms and style. They would likely agree with their beloved Michelangelo, who said, "The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection.'" (Abood, p. 32)

The Latin Mass Today

In June of 2008, Westminster Cathedral was filled to its capacity with 1500 plus worshipers. Roman Catholic Cardinal, Castrillon Hoya, President of the Ecclesia Dei Commission and Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Clergy, was invited to Westminster to say the Traditional Latin. The following month, the Pope was in

Australia for World Youth Day. He celebrated mass using some of the traditions of the Tridentine mass, including, Gregorian chant. It was a great success! What was even more extraordinary about both of these celebrations was the enthusiasm for the Latin mass by young worshipers who were born post Vatican II. Latin mass societies can be found globally. More churches are adding Latin mass to their schedules to accommodate the ever-demanding request for the Latin mass. Latin societies, magazines, and other Latin-supported venues now populate the world. It seems as though Catholics want to return to their roots or at least part of them. “Faith in core religious doctrines has not changed, loyalty to the Catholic heritage has not changed, even the pre-disposition to choose a spouse who is Catholic has not changed. Nor has the sacramentalism or the communalism of Catholicism, which in fact is what keeps Catholics in the Church.” (Greeley, p. 193)

In his article, “A Return to Tradition”, Jay Tolson sees a new interest in old ways not just in Catholicism but in other faiths as well. He says that this phenomenon is happening world-wide. He doesn’t see it as a reflection on what people believe but how they practice their religion. “The development is a return to tradition and orthodoxy, to past practices, observances, and customary ways of worshiping.” (Tolson, p. 2) He sees a new trend developing where the people draw from past traditions, rituals and resources and then create something new. “They are engaging in what Penn State sociologist of religion Roger Finke calls, “innovative return to tradition”.” (Tolson, p. 2)

Tolson sees this happening in the Jewish and Islamic circles as well. Many in the more conservative denominations of Judaism are beginning to practice and shift toward

the “older ways”. (Tolson, p. 2) And in the Islamic communities, one can see more young people wearing the scarves and observing the rules of their faith.

What does all this mean? Tolson believes for some the authority and absolutes are reassuring. That makes sense if one takes in account the economic woes of today. For others, the return the roots of their religion could be “a means of moving beyond fundamentalist liberalism, troubling authority figures, and highly politicized religious positions while still retaining a hold on spiritual truths.” (Tolson, p. 3) Reverend Thomas Reese, a Jesuit priest and political scientist at Georgetown’s Woodstock Theological Center believes the new trend is more propaganda than anything. He thinks the Church should forget about the Latin mass and focus on three things; “good preaching, good music, and a welcoming community.” (Tolson, p. 3) On the other hand, Sister Patricia Wittberg, a sociologist at Indiana University believes the new traditionalism has more meaning. “I think churches that can articulate what they do and what they stand for tends to grow better.” (Tolson, pp. 3-4) She sees the conventional turn in the Church as a good thing but stresses there two types of traditions. Some traditionalists want to take the Church back to the 16th Century but that simply wouldn’t work. Others though have found a way to blend the orthodox ways with the modern world and they seem to like it.

Bringing back some lost traditions was a high priority for Father Jeff Keyes at St. Edward’s Parish in San Francisco. He was transferred to the thriving parish in 2004 but felt that the service portrayed a lackadaisical approach to the liturgy. He went about making drastic changes to the mass that disrupted and disturbed many of the regular attendees. “His most striking innovation was to transform the parish’s 10 a.m. service into a “sung Mass,” with many parts being sung in Latin using Gregorian chant.” (Nixon

J. P., p. 12) What Father Keyes succeeding in doing was blending the old with the new. The ordinary and antiphon parts of the mass are chanted in Latin. The readings and most of the responses are in English and the Eucharistic Prayer is chanted in it's entirety in English by Father Keyes alone. The director of religious education is not happy about all the changes. She feels that Father Keyes moved too quickly to make change but she does acknowledge that "Keyes may have brought a much-needed sense of reverence back into the liturgy. I think Father Jeff may have brought some needed discipline." (Nixon J. P., p. 13)

Labor Day weekend I went to visit my brother and friend in Baltimore, Md. I decided it would be a good time to observe another Latin Mass and my brother and friend offered to accompany me. After doing a little research I found a church in the heart of Baltimore that offered the Latin rite. St. Alphonus was built by a German community in 1845 and modeled after St. Stephens Cathedral, Vienna, Austria. The church is a beautiful example of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Its high faulted ceilings and distant main altar are two of the notable features of the Church. Large pillars adorned with statues of the saints divide the church into 4 sections with the main aisle leading to the high altar. Other smaller altars are scattered about the church. The stain-glass windows are enormous and are flanked by large stone plaques depicting the Stations of the Cross. My friends and I were in awe of this beautiful work of art, a lasting tribute to the people who built it. As for the mass, I found it awful. The priest was in-audible; mumbling the Latin rite. I felt there was nothing at all redeeming about the Liturgy.

I later interviewed my friends. I wanted to hear what they thought about the Latin rite.

Thomas Clements, a non Catholic said this: “The Church was beautiful. I was glad to see the restoration work underway and that they weren’t letting the Church rot. The usher was very friendly and helpful but I found the smell of incense and wax oppressive. It was difficult to breath; a fan was needed to move the air around. I didn’t like the two people in front of us saying the rosary out loud. I don’t like public displays of faith. Maybe it does them some good but many consider it a sinful display. The mass was a disappointment. I couldn’t hear a thing. The missal was a nice touch and I was eager to follow but couldn’t hear a word. I was lost till I saw the priest open the Bible.” (Clements, 2010)

I was a little surprised at what Tom said because I’ve known him for years to be a staunch Protestant but he seemed very interested in my thesis and gladly offered his views. He is a big fan of organ music and really seemed very interested in the Church and the restoration that was on-going.

Ernie Zimmerman, a Catholic and former altar boy said: “I felt I was going back in the past and it made me feel very uncomfortable. There was no participation. I looked around and felt that nobody could possibly understand was going on; you couldn’t even hear the priest. I wondered what all these people were thinking. I thought they must have been either praying independently or thinking about what they were going to have for dinner. What was the point of Latin? Originally, Latin was used because it was the only language. It’s just another refusal of the Church to change with the times. It took them almost 500 years to change. The first thing the Protestant churches did 500 years ago was to change the service to the vernacular. It just shows the refusal of the Church to change.” (Zimmerman, 2010)

My brother views were somewhat harder than those of Tom and myself but I have to say they were certainly justified. People were just going through the motions.

Conclusion

Vatican II was John XXIII vision for a new vibrant Church. He knew the Church was in need of change as it emerged into the 20th century. What John didn’t foresee was that calling the council initiated an event that turned into a revolution. As Andrew Greeley put it; “the Roman Curia, introduced relatively modest changes to the Church that were too much for the rigid structures of nineteenth-century Catholicism to absorb.

They poured new wine into old wineskins and the wineskins burst.” (Greeley, p. 1) The bishops felt that nothing much had really changed but the lower clergy along with the laity felt a new vitality within the church, a vitality which led to revolution. Because of the climate of the 1960’s, they no longer believed in blind obedience. They created their own reform. They would be Catholic but on their own terms.

One of the effects of this revolution was the reform of the liturgy. The Vatican had made distinct changes but liturgical groups ignored the Vatican and branded their own form of liturgy. In their quest to reform, many traditions such as music, art, architecture, and the Latin language, which some Catholics held dear, were swept away. The bishops never envisioned this would happen. They felt the papal edicts issued by Vatican II, especially those concerning the liturgy, were taken out of context. They were very upset that the power flowed upward instead of downward.

Now, after almost 50 years, many are returning to the pre-Vatican II traditions. A traditionalist wave has spread across the world not only in the Catholic faith but in other religions as well. People are embracing the traditions of the past as well as making new ones. A reform of the reform is currently underway and a new missal promulgated by Pope Benedict is due to be released in 2011. He wants the power shift to go back to where it was before Vatican II; that is authority flowing from the top to the bottom. He’s pinning his hopes for the church on a new liturgical renewal. In his own words, Benedict explains the crisis in the Church.

I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy, which at times has even come to be conceived of *etsi Deus non daretur*: in that it is a matter of indifference whether or not God exists and whether or not He speaks to us and hears us. But when the community of faith, the world-wide unity of the Church and her history, and the mystery of the living

Christ are no longer visible in the liturgy, where else, then, is the Church to become visible in her spiritual essence? Then the community is celebrating only itself, an activity that is utterly fruitless. And, because the ecclesial community cannot have its origin from itself but emerges as a unity only from the Lord, through faith, such circumstances will inexorably result in disintegration into sectarian parties of all kinds - partisan opposition within a Church tearing herself apart. This is why we need a new Liturgical Movement, which will call to life the real heritage of the Second Vatican Council. (Ratzinger, p. 149)

The question is will the laity conform and will the new traditions combined with the old bring the Church out of its despair into a new period of confidence, hope, and glory? Will people accept the new changes? Only time will tell!

Final Thoughts

I had been a devout Catholic most of my life but drifted away from the Church shortly after the sex-abuse scandals surfaced. I could no longer support a church that didn't live up to the philosophy that it preached. Nostalgia, after seeing the movie *Doubt*, got me thinking again about my youth and the ceremonies that were tied to my religion. But it wasn't till after I attended a funeral service that I felt a longing to return to my faith. The funeral service was at a Catholic church in Hammonton, NJ. The celebrant was Father Thomas Donio, a new priest to the area, who was acting as the Priest Convener for the merger of three of the local parishes. I had never been to a funeral that I had actually enjoyed. Father Donio managed to blend the old with the new and pull off an extraordinary ceremony that was both uplifting and spiritual. He chanted, spoke both Latin and English, used incense, and delivered an inspiring homily. I came from the funeral feeling alive and spiritually renewed.

My point is that Vatican II got it right. The council fathers wanted to combine the old with the new. They never said that Latin, chanting, organs, and statues be thrown

away. They wanted to bring the Church into the modern world while at the same time keeping some of the traditions and rituals of the past. I attended two inclusive Latin masses. They were awful. They simply went back to the old ways without any creativity. However, many priests are combining the old with the new. They're bringing back some of post Vatican II traditions that were cast aside by overly zealous liturgists. They are trying to revive the Catholic church and the Liturgy. I believe they have chosen the right path!

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