

Tridentine Community News

August 17, 2008

The Sanctus Candle

Today we will introduce a new practice at the Tridentine Mass, the Sanctus Candle. An old tradition permitted as an option in the 1962 Missal, this is an extra, short candle placed on the Epistle (right) side of the altar. It is lit at the Sanctus – hence the name – and extinguished after Holy Communion.

The Sanctus Candle draws attention to our Lord's Real Presence on the Altar during that portion of Holy Mass. This is the same purpose served by the torches that are employed when we have sufficient altar servers. When we use torches, we will not use the Sanctus Candle. On a practical level, it is also unlikely that the Sanctus Candle will be used at a Low Mass when we have only one altar server, as that one server has other, mandatory duties.

The Rubrics allow the Sanctus Candle during a Low Mass, but not during a Solemn High Mass, because at least two torchbearers are required to befit the additional ceremonial of the latter. A *Missa Cantata* – Mass sung by a priest without deacon or subdeacon – is technically a Low Mass per the Rubrics, thus we will use the Sanctus Candle at our Sunday sung Masses.

While visually similar, the Sanctus Candle is not the same thing as the *Bugia*, the hand-candle held next to Pontifical (book) and Missal during a Mass said by a bishop. Unlike a *Bugia*, a Sanctus Candle does not necessarily have a handle by which it is held. Both candles symbolize the Light of Christ, but the *Bugia* had actual practical value in the days before electric light, as the bishop needed to read vesting prayers from the Pontifical before Mass and after Mass, away from the illuminated altar.

The New Papal Altar Arrangement

Pope Benedict XVI has recently begun arranging the altars on which he celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in a more traditional manner. Even when he says Mass *versus populum* (facing the people), he maintains six tall candlesticks on the altar, spaced out as they would be on an altar arranged for a sung Tridentine Mass.



In the center of the altar, he places a crucifix. In his writings, and now in practice, our Holy Father has stated that when *ad orientem* celebration (in the Novus Ordo) is not possible, the celebrant

should have something on which to focus his attention during the Mass, so that he does not become distracted by the congregation or focused on pleasing the crowd. In continuity with Tridentine

norms, Pope Benedict suggests that a central crucifix serve as that focal point.

In the Extraordinary Form, a crucifix is indeed required on or above the altar. The celebrant incenses the crucifix at the beginning of Mass and at the Offertory. As he begins the Collect and Postcommunion prayers, while saying *Orémus*, he bows to the crucifix. Note that he is *not* bowing to the tabernacle. The Rubrics do not require there to be a tabernacle at the center of the altar. While that is desirable for a number of reasons, it is nevertheless the crucifix, and not the tabernacle, that is specified as the object of veneration.

In the accompanying photo, you will notice that our Holy Father has also begun placing a *seventh* candle on the altar. This is not a Sanctus Candle – such a thing does not exist in the Ordinary Form Rubrics – but rather a candle used when the Ordinary of a Diocese or the Pope, the Universal Ordinary, celebrates Mass. It serves as a reminder that the bishop or Pope there present stands in the place of Christ.

Call for Event Ideas and Volunteers

We are blessed to have some talented and well-connected people in the congregations of Assumption-Windsor, St. Josaphat, and our sister parishes. We also have access to five of the most beautiful historic churches in North America – Assumption, St. Josaphat, St. Joseph, Sweetest Heart of Mary, and St. Albertus – nearly one another yet curiously in two countries.

As the next stage in the evolution of our Tridentine communities, it would make sense to organize some events involving one or more of our churches. Those events could range from the simple (bringing in guest speakers well-known in Tridentine circles) to the grandiose (hosting a Latin Liturgy Association convention with events spread across multiple churches). 2007's Gregorian Chant Workshop at St. Josaphat and this year's Tridentine Mass Seminar at Assumption were examples of simple events that proved quite popular. Beyond that, architecturally and liturgically, Detroit can now vie with Chicago, St. Louis, and New York City as a site for major gatherings.

Do you have any suggestions for events we could hold? Please be specific: Name the speakers you have in mind, and mention any pertinent details you can think of. If you have a direct or indirect connection to potential speaker(s), please explain. E-mail the address at the bottom of this page or speak to one of the ushers after Mass.

Even more important than ideas is time – your time. In order to put on a special event, we will need volunteers to plan the event, submit advertising, arrange for and transport the guests, prepare and serve refreshments, clean up afterwards, and so forth. The simplest event will need around seven volunteers. A Latin Liturgy Association Convention would require around thirty. Each event will also need a principal organizer to take charge of it. Let's put on our thinking caps and see what we might be able to do with the "extraordinary" people and facilities we are blessed to enjoy.