

Tridentine Community News

September 21, 2008

Tridentine Mass Subtleties

In previous columns, we have made mention of a number of finer points in the Extraordinary Form of Holy Mass. Today, we will recap these and mention some additional ones:

Making the Responses

In a Sung Mass (Missa Cantata, Solemn High, or Pontifical), the faithful are encouraged – not just permitted – to join the altar servers in making all of the sung responses, such as “*Et cum spiritu tuo*”, plus the recited “*Dómine, non sum dignus*” before Holy Communion and those surrounding the Last Gospel. The priest says the *Pater Noster* alone; the faithful only say the concluding line. At a Low Mass, the faithful may make the recited responses except those during the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar at the beginning of Mass.

The 1958 Vatican instruction *De Música Sacra* permits the faithful to make additional responses, such as the Prayers at the Foot of the Altar and singing the *Pater Noster* along with the priest, although these practices are very rarely witnessed. At our Masses, we do not employ these practices because we wish to follow the more standard customs outlined in the preceding paragraph.

No Response After Sung Readings

Unlike in the Novus Ordo, the servers and faithful do not respond with “*Deo grátias*” after a sung Epistle or “*Laus Tibi, Christe*” after a sung Gospel in a Sung Mass. The responses are only given after recited readings both in otherwise Sung Masses and in Low Masses. We are not aware of the reason for this practice, yet it is clear that this is the intent. However, “*Deo grátias*” is always said at the end of the (always recited) Last Gospel in both Low and Sung Masses.

No Cross or Response at the Vernacular Readings

As signified by the celebrant removing his maniple before reading the Epistle and Gospel in English, the vernacular readings and homily are actually not part of the Mass. Therefore, it is not necessary to make the triple sign of the Cross before the English reading of the Holy Gospel, nor to respond with “Thanks be to God” after the Epistle or “Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ” after the Holy Gospel. Those are liturgical actions, and we are outside the liturgy at this point. The Crosses, and the responses as outlined above, are only required during the initial Latin readings. Nevertheless, these are understandable habits as well as pious practices, thus they are not prohibited.

It's Sed, not Sic

For some reason, it is common to hear the faithful pronounce the Prayer Before Communion as “*Dómine, non sum dignus, ut intres sub tectum meum, sic tantum dic verbo, et sanábitur ánima mea.*” The word to use is actually “*sed*”, Latin for “but”, as “*sic*” means “therefore” or “thus”. In English: “Lord I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, **but** only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”

Method of Receiving Holy Communion

In the Tridentine Mass, it is customary for the communicant to receive Holy Communion on the Tongue, kneeling at the Communion Rail. If the communicant cannot kneel, he or she may receive standing at the rail. If the communicant cannot approach the rail, the priest or deacon will bring Communion to the communicant in the pew.



Strictly speaking, current Canon Law does permit the reception of the Sacred Host in the hand in the Extraordinary as well as Ordinary Forms of Holy Mass. This is not the historical custom, however, and is therefore

discouraged, much as hymns from the Glory & Praise hymnal are discouraged at a Tridentine Mass. Practices have their places.

“Amen” is not said by the communicant before receiving the Sacred Host, as the priest says “Amen” on behalf of the communicant as part of his own prayer.

Prayers After Low Mass

Pope Leo XIII ordered the addition of the Prayers After Low Mass seen in virtually every Tridentine Hand Missal. The 1962 edition of the Roman Missal no longer requires these to be said, but common custom is to recite them, as we do at St. Josaphat’s Monday 7:00 PM Low Mass. Being outside the Mass per se, their use is not a matter of rubrics, as for example, using the suppressed *Confíteor* before Holy Communion would be.

Bishop Boyea Mass in Flint Cancelled

Due to a scheduling conflict, Bishop Boyea will not be able to celebrate Mass next Sunday, September 28, at Flint’s All Saints Church. At press time, the Flint Latin Mass Committee was trying to find another special celebrant for this, their annual Anniversary Mass and Dinner. Bishop Boyea hopes to reschedule for a future date.