

Tridentine Community News

December 6, 2009

Clarity in Blessings: A Comparison of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Roman Ritual – Part 3 of 3

The Devil Does Not Deserve Politeness

Certain Extraordinary Form rituals contain exorcisms that are not present in their Ordinary Form counterparts. The Blessing of Holy Water, for example, incorporates exorcisms of the salt and water, before they are commingled. The Sacrament of Baptism contains an exorcism of salt as well as three exorcisms of the candidate before the words of Baptism are pronounced.

Baptism drives out the Original Sin that every man has been born with since Satan first tempted Eve. The Sacrament should clearly convey, in language and in ritual, what it is doing. The direct language of the Extraordinary Form of Baptism acknowledges the reality of the devil and his minions and addresses them directly. The First Exorcism reads, “Depart from him (her), unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Consoler.”

The Second Exorcism reads: “I cast you out, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy ✠ Spirit. Depart and stay far away from this servant (these servants) of God, N. (N. and N.). For it is the Lord Himself Who commands you, accursed and doomed spirit, He who walked on the sea and reached out His hand to Peter as he was sinking. So then, foul fiend, recall the curse that decided your fate once for all. Indeed, pay homage to the living and true God, pay homage to Jesus Christ, His Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Keep far from this servant of God, N., for Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, has freely called him (her) to His holy grace and blessed way and to the waters of baptism. Accursed devil, never dare to desecrate this sign of the holy ✠ Cross which we are tracing upon his (her) brow. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The Third Exorcism reads: “I cast you out, every unclean spirit, in the name of God the ✠ Father almighty, in the name of Jesus ✠ Christ, His Son, our Lord and judge, and in the power of the Holy ✠ Spirit. Begone, Satan, from God's handiwork, N. Because our Lord (has) graciously called him her to His holy sanctuary, where he (she) will become a dwelling place for the living God, a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. We ask this in the name of Christ our Lord, who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world and the dead and the world by fire. Amen.”

In contrast, there is only one exorcism in the Ordinary Form of Baptism: “Almighty and ever-living God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendor of your kingdom of light. We pray for this child: set him (her) free from original sin, make him (her) a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him (her). We ask this through Christ our Lord.”

Civility is all well and good. Anyone from North America who travels to England and witnesses how polite people are to one another there will realize how comparatively crude our

interactions are on this side of the Atlantic. However, the devil does not deserve politeness. Our Lord Himself did not hesitate to tell him to depart in no uncertain terms: “Begone Satan!” [St. Matthew 4. 10]. An exorcism is not a situation in which to engage in polite discourse; the father of all lies does not deserve anything but the most direct response. One is not negotiating with an equal. Yet the Ordinary Form represents a different, indirect approach, that of requesting God to purge the effects of Original Sin, instead of a command, or even a reference, to Satan or his demons.

A related issue with the English Book of Blessings is that just as the devil is not repulsed as strongly, the Holy Trinity is given less reverence. It refers to our Lord as “you”, often with a small “y”, not “Thee” with a capital “T”. It does not use supplicative phrasing such as “we beseech Thee” as commonly as before. Yet downplaying something does not make it go away. God is not just some other person to be casually addressed, nor are Satan’s wiles to be trivialized. As the traditional saying goes, *Lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief): If we don’t acknowledge their distinctiveness from the mundane, we tend to diminish both the Divinity and sacrality of God and the unspeakable evil and havoc that the devil can wreak upon us.

There is no reason for Holy Mother Church to withhold her great powers of blessing, intercession, and exorcism. Her Sacraments and official blessings should reflect the authority which Christ has given Her to sanctify the lives of the faithful. Unlike the weak wording of parts of the present English Ordinary Form Mass, the indirectness of the prayers in the Ordinary Form Roman Ritual is not merely due to a poor job of translation. The original Latin text is the primary culprit.

Fortunately, the treasure that is the Extraordinary Form Roman Ritual is now available for all Catholics to make use of, provided that a supportive priest will use those books. It seems logical that in matters of blessings and Sacraments, if one is to engage in them at all, one should use the clearest expression of those prayers. Few people go to a fine steakhouse and order a hamburger. Readers of this column have been blessed with the availability of the Extraordinary Form blessings and Sacraments upon request at Assumption-Windsor and St. Josaphat Churches.

Assumption Church Restoration Update

Windsor’s Assumption Church has begun a major fundraising campaign to raise \$9,800,000 needed to remedy some serious structural problems. Because of the significance of Assumption in the history of the city of Windsor, support is being sought from secular as well as conventional Catholic sources. A new web site has been created for the campaign, with architect’s concepts for the updated campus: www.assumptionheritagetrust.org. Fear not, this is a restoration, not a wreckovation. In fact, traditional elements of the church such as the high altar and high pulpit are prominently featured in campaign materials.

We are honored that campaign leaders have invited five members of Assumption’s Tridentine Mass Community to serve on the advisory committee for the effort.

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail tridnews@stjosaphatchurch.org. Previous columns are available at www.stjosaphatchurch.org