



LATIN LITURGY ASSOCIATION

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Chairman's Letter

Although in some ways the liturgical situation in Europe is no better than it is in the United States, it nonetheless remains the case that in many in Europe at least some elements of Latin liturgy have been retained over the past fifteen years and regular Latin Masses have been available in most of the major European cities. In America, by contrast, Latin has been banished almost completely. Even in the largest cities people find it necessary to search very hard for a Latin Mass, and even then are not always rewarded.

Writing in the Christmas, 1980, issue of Sacred Signs, the Dominican Father Giles Dimock, a professor at Providence College, describes his own experiences in France last year. At Lourdes, for example, Latin antiphons are used in some of the public processions, and solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in Latin concludes the daily rites. Some monasteries, notably Solesmes and Fontgambault, still use Latin as part of their regular monastic worship. Sung Gregorian Masses are offered regularly in several Paris churches, and there is a Parisian quasi-monastic community, Fraternité de Jerusalem, which attracts crowds to its very long, solemn offices, parts of which are also in Latin.

We can only speculate as to why Latin has disappeared so completely in America. But there is no doubt that this rich liturgical tradition has been allowed to fall into so much neglect that it has ceased to be a living tradition. Sometimes young people who are exposed to it are very impressed. It comes, however, as a revelation to them, not, as it should, as the re-awakening of deeply rooted and familiar realities.

Sacred Signs, by the way, is a fairly new journal devoted to liturgy and the religious arts which members of the Association might find interesting and uplifting. It is published quarterly at ten dollars per year and can be ordered from Sacred Signs, Box 577, Newport, Rhode Island 02840.

James Hitchcock

Latin Liturgy Association - Dues of five dollars per year should be sent to Dr. James Hitchcock, Chairman, at 6158 Kingsbury Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63112. Editorial material should be sent to Charles G. Mills, Editor, at 4-5 Granada Crescent, White Plains, New York 10603. Changes of address should be sent to Albert N. Garland, Secretary, 5 Forestwood Court, Columbus, Georgia 31907.

From the Vatican

Beginning December 2, 1981 there is daily exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in St. Peter's Basilica, except Sundays and Solemnities. Exposition will end with Vespers in Italian, followed by Mass sung in Latin. This is only one of many daily Latin Masses in St. Peter's.

On April 11, 1981, a new mobile organ was presented to the Holy See for use in outdoor Masses in St. Peter's Square. On this occasion the Holy Father pointed out that the Second Vatican Council had designated the pipe organ as the traditional musical instrument of the Latin Church.

Local News

Congratulations to our member, Father Dennis Bonsignore, ordained on May 23, 1981 as a priest of the Diocese of Rochester, New York. His first Mass was celebrated in Latin on May 24 at Holy Apostles Church in Rochester. Father Bonsignore is a former student at St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester, which closed this year. St. Bernard's has been distinguished for the quality of its liturgical music. Our member and contributor to this newsletter, Professor Vincent A. Lenti has high praise for a Latin Mass at the Seminary on April 30, 1981.

Our congratulations also to our member, Father James King, C. M. who celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his ordination last June in Springfield, Massachusetts. The Mass was in Latin to the extent permitted by Father King's Pastor. Father King is now teaching Latin in the Vincentian seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

Finally congratulations to Father John Brill, a member, who celebrated the forty-ninth anniversary of his ordination with a Latin Mass accompanied by a forty voice choir in June. Father Brill celebrates Mass in Latin at least weekly at St. Vincent de Paul in Corning, New York. A recent requiem Mass in Latin at his Church was attended by 300 people, many of whom were moved to hear their first Latin Mass in years.

Bad news from New York City. None of the Latin Masses in New York City previously recommended by this newsletter is still celebrated.

Miscellany

An excellent article appeared in the November 19, 1981 issue of The Wanderer by Joseph T. Gill entitled "Playing with the Liturgy." The article deals in the main with three subjects: the regularization of lectors in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska; the absence of Latin Masses in Chicago; and the abuses of extraordinary Eucharistic ministers.

Mr. Gill correctly ties the Lincoln action to the widespread abuses of women assuming liturgical roles of men. He does not, however, set forth the actual discipline of the Church regarding lectors, which is being properly followed in Lincoln, and as far as I know nowhere else in the Country. The preferred person to read the lessons other than the Gospel is a lector. The "lectors" we see in the typical parish church are not true lectors but ordinary members of the congregation acting in their absence. Most true lectors in the United States are second year major seminarians. This office is not, however, restricted to seminarians and bishops may appoint to it mature, educated lay males. This is what Bishop Flavin of Lincoln has done.

Mr. Gill tells much of the public story of the suppression of the Latin Mass in Chicago under the pretense that no one wants it. Mr. Gill has accepted the public story that the Latin Mass in Chicago "petered out" while recognizing the potential demand for it. Your editor, however, knows that in April, 1974 Cardinal Cody, personally forbade, by telephone call to at least one Chicago pastor, the continuation of Latin Masses.

Mr. Gill correctly points out that extraordinary ministers are supposed to be used only in extraordinary circumstances. The ordinary ministers of the Eucharist are the Priest, the Deacon and the acolyte.

The ordinary ministries of lector and acolyte are open to men only. It is for this reason, one suspects, that they are neglected in favor of the extraordinary ministries. There is much misunderstanding of the role of women in the Church in America today and it manifests itself not only in the widespread underground sacrileges known as women's liturgies, but also in the abuses of the extraordinary ministries.

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Your editor has been asked what a young man with a vocation who loves the Latin liturgy should do. Readers of this newsletter are aware that many priests are members. Some of them can celebrate Mass in Latin quite frequently. Others may not be able to do so even monthly. Every priest in this Association is distinguished by the virtue of obedience in liturgical matters and in service to his people. There is no certainty that any diocese or monastery will continue to favor Latin. There will always, however, be people to serve.

Editor