

Some are also troubled by the fact that the Novus Ordo Mass may vary so widely among parishes as to be almost unrecognizable - unlike the "Tridentine" Mass which remains fixed, with only slight variations (e.g. High Mass vs. Low Mass). Ultimately, many Catholics have come to believe that the Traditional Latin Mass must be more pleasing to God and that it is best suited to our primary duty in life (that is, "to know, love, and serve God" (Baltimore Catechism)).

Catholics who have never experienced a "Tridentine" Latin Mass may consider the time spent at Mass as a time for "religious entertainment" or socializing. In fact, some even think the "sign of peace" is the focal point of Mass! The cure for such mistaken beliefs surely is knowledge of and attendance at traditional Latin "Tridentine" Masses, which makes the purpose of the Mass eminently clear. Although such Catholics may initially be perplexed about the silence and majesty of the traditional Latin Mass and might not immediately "get it," a little perseverance and some additional knowledge, prayer, and reflection, may cause them to also flock to the Mass of their grandfathers, regardless of what obstacles may be placed in the way. They may soon find themselves so in love with this Mass - the "Mass of the saints" and "the most beautiful thing this side of heaven" - that they would do just about anything they could to attend it.

We warmly invite you to attend this incomparable Mass and see for yourself what has captured the hearts of so many other good and faithful Catholics over the centuries.

Brief Comparison of the Old & New Rites of Mass

You may find these and other differences between the Traditional Latin ("Tridentine") Mass and the New (Novus Ordo) Mass of the 1960's (most commonly said at Catholic parishes at the end of the 20th century):

- * The 'Tridentine' Mass has a more vertical focus - a focus more on God than on fellow parishioners
- * The 'Tridentine' Mass is clearly a sacrifice (as opposed to a meal, as many 'moderns' want the faithful to view the Mass)
- * The 'Tridentine' Mass emphasizes self-denial, awareness of sin
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, the priest typically faces eastward, symbolically towards Christ (not towards the parishioners)
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there is increased reverence at the altar and extreme reverence for the Holy Eucharist
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there are ample references to atoning for sin, hell, judgment, and the intercession of saints
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, a fixed liturgy (containing the Church's traditional prayers) is used throughout the Church, which is not subject to personal preference or manipulation
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there are reverent silent periods where the priest leads prayers on our behalf
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there is more genuflecting and kneeling by the parishioners
- * The 'Tridentine' Mass uses a different, fuller calendar
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there are fewer rote responses by the parishioners
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, the unchanged, traditional prayers of consecration are used
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, Holy Communion is given *only* by priests - to kneeling communicants on the tongue (excepting, of course, those physically unable to kneel)
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there are no 'altar girls'; no lay readers, and no Eucharistic ministers
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there is a longer silent period after Communion for prayer & thanksgiving
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, pipe organs and Gregorian chant are employed rather than guitars and drums
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, the priest is not sitting off to the side while lay "take charge"
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, there is no hand-holding or "kiss of peace" among the laity
- * In the 'Tridentine' Mass, the stable rubrics help assure that liturgical abuses do not occur

And, of course, the Latin language is used for the majority of the 'Tridentine' Mass (you may follow along with a Latin/English missal).

- * Latin Mass attendees state that the above contribute to a more holy and reverent atmosphere with fewer distractions.
- * Further note that the Tridentine Mass - unlike the Novus Ordo -
 - * Keeps the distinction between priest and laity clear
 - * Is unquestionably a propitiatory Sacrifice
 - * Fosters a healthy fear of the Lord ("The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the LORD" (Prov. 9:10))
 - * Safeguards piety / reverence / respect / etc.
 - * Has aesthetic appeal

- * Keeps the focus on God rather than on the community
- * Provides a taste of the supernatural
- * Helps foster belief in the Real Presence
- * Gives the Holy Eucharist the highest degree of veneration
- * Carefully protects against heresy
- * Fosters awareness that the Mass is the re-presentation of Calvary
- * Is penitential
- * Encourages interior participation
- * Is conducive to the proper dispositions for Holy Communion
- * Is unequivocally Catholic
- * Is universal, timeless, and awe-inspiring

Whereas the Novus Ordo Mass...

- * Is welcomed by Protestants (heretics) who reject the Real Presence
- * Was drafted with the assistance of Protestant 'observers' As Davies states: "I went to the trouble of writing directly to one of the [Protestant] Observers, who assured me that they took a very active part in the study meetings which were held in the summer of 1962, and that they were very helpful. He further states: "The Protestant Observers, while not allowed to speak in the plenary sessions, were able to take an active part in the informal discussion where the real work of drafting the documents was done. Their influence is visible in the finalized documents themselves".
- * They are not there simply as observers, but also as expert advisers and they participate fully in discussions on the Catholic liturgical renewal. If they had only listened there would have been much sense in their being invited." (Msgr. Baum, as reported in newspaper (9/27/1967))
- * Conforms to many Protestant practices

"The changes [are] echoing everything that was done at the Reformation... the Martyrs have died for nothing." (Hugh Ross Williamson, famous Catholic convert)

"... for on many points [the New Mass] has much to gladden the heart of even the most modernist Protestant." (Cardinals Ottaviani & Bacci)

- * [T]he new Roman rite is similar to, and sometimes identical with, Cranmer's Anglican Mass produced in the sixteenth century. (Iota Utrum, footnote)
- * Omits elements offensive to Protestants ("The New Rite of Mass deleted many words and concepts - and even entire prayers - that Protestants reject. Deleted items include: invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to saints and to angels, references to purgatory, references to a propitiatory sacrifice, references to the hierarchical priesthood, etc. 7)
- * Has even been used by Protestants for their 'services' - even though they reject the Real Presence! Does this not beg the question of why those who reject the Mass as a sacrifice and who reject the Real Presence can use a liturgy designed for Catholics who believe in the Mass as a sacrifice and in the Real Presence?

- * Diminishes the role of the priest
 - * Eliminates (or nearly eliminates) all sacred silence
- "But the LORD is in his holy temple; silence before him, all the earth!" (Hab. 2:20)
- "Silence in the presence of the Lord GOD!" (Zeph. 1:7)
- "Let all mortal flesh be silent, standing there...in fear and trembling...before the Lord our God; for the Lord our God is about to be sacrificed and to be given as food to the faithful." (St. James)
- * Has been charged with banality by high-ranking prelates.

"In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (St. Paul, Phil. 2:10)

"All who sleep in the earth will bow (or before God; All who have come down into the dust will kneel in homage." (Ps. 22:33)

"I bend my knee to the Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named" (St. Paul, Eph. 3:14).

Finally, as some saints have said:

"[T]he Princes stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican." (Lk. 18:11) [It is said 'standing' to denote his haughty temper. For his very posture betokens his extreme pride. (St. Theophylact)]

[He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in the Son of God? And Jesus said to him, You have both seen him, and it is he that talks with you. And he said, Lord, I believe. And falling down, he worshipped him. (Jn. 9:36-38)] An example to us, not to pray to God with uplifted neck, but with the head with supplicity, to implore His mercy." (St. Basil the Venerable, Doctor of the Church)

"But what means His bending of knees? of which it is said, And he kneeled down, and prayed. It is the way of men to pray to their superiors with their faces on the ground, testifying by the action that the greater of the two are those who are asked. Now it is plain that human nature contains nothing worthy of God's imitation. Accordingly the tokens of respect which we evince to one another, contesting ourselves to be inferior to our neighbors, we have transferred to the one who bore our sickness and interceded for us, and His knees in prayer, by reason of the man which He assumed, giving us an example, but in all things be conformed to humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (St. Gregory of Nyssa)

Error: The 'Tridentine' Mass is For 'Old People'

The 'Tridentine' Mass is not just for 'old people'! In fact, the Tridentine Mass appeals to persons of all ages. As Pope Benedict XVI stated "young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist particularly suited to them." Note that those who regularly attend Latin Masses are of all ages from young to old.

Error: The Reforms After the Second Vatican Council Were Similar to Previous Reforms

Facts "The wholesale changes in the liturgy are unprecedented in the 2,000 year history of the church" The Roman Missal was reformed during the pontificate of Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604 A.D.), but his reforms were faithful to tradition. His work remained virtually unchanged until the Second Vatican Council. As stated by one liturgical scholar: "From roughly the time of [Pope] St. Gregory [the Great, d. 604] we have the text of the Mass, its order and arrangement, as a sacred tradition that no one has ventured to touch except in unimportant details." (Fortescue, 1912 A.D.)

"It is an indisputable fact that never in the history of the Church has any Pope presided over so wholesale an abolition of traditional customs and ceremonies as Pope Paul VI. The only comparable revolution was that of the Protestant 'Reformation' but this was done by men who were openly acting outside the unity of the Church." (Davies)

Remember that the Traditional Latin Mass was developed over many centuries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the most essential parts were considered "untouchable". In contrast, the Novus Ordo Mass was fabricated in the 1960's by a commission of men (and this commission even received 'assistance' from six Protestant observers!).

"The great Catholic philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand has rightly castigated the authors of the new liturgy for imagining that they could improve upon a rite which had developed almost imperceptibly over the centuries under the guidance of the Holy Ghost." (Davies)

The Traditional Latin Mass is often called the "Tridentine" Mass, since its codification is tied to the Council of Trent. In contrast to the Novus Ordo (New Order) Mass of the 1960's however, the 'Tridentine' Mass was not fabricated by men. Rather, most of its central elements are said to trace back - nearly without change - to apostolic times.

Therefore, although it is convenient to refer to the Traditional Latin Mass as the "Tridentine" Mass, it is somewhat misleading. In fact, it is generally thought to be unfortunate that the traditional Mass is referred to as the "Tridentine" Mass since this practice has led to the widespread impression that it was composed following the Council of Trent." As Davies says, "it should be made clear immediately that the terms 'Tridentine Mass' and 'Mass of St. Pius V' are not strictly accurate. They give the impression that the Mass promulgated by St. Pius V was a new Mass composed on the instructions of the Fathers of the Council of Trent. On the contrary...the Tridentine Fathers endorsed the Missal then in use in Rome, a Missal whose use had long transcended the boundaries of the Eternal City and which...already formed the basis of most of the Mass rites in use throughout Latin Christendom."

"One cannot emphasize enough that St. Pius V did not promulgate a new Order of Mass (Novus Ordo Missae). The very idea of composing a new order of Mass was and is totally alien to the whole Catholic ethos, both in the East and in the West. The whole tradition has been to hold fast to what has been handed down and to look upon any novelty with the utmost suspicion. The essence of the reform of St. Pius V, was like that of St. Gregory the Great, respect for tradition." (Davies, emphasis added)

He also states:

"[T]he unbroken tradition of East and West for over 1,600 years, that the Eucharistic Liturgy should never be subjected to radical reform, although it might develop through the addition of new prayers and ceremonies was reached in 1970 when the newly composed Missal of Pope Paul VI was published; the New Order of Mass having been published in 1969." (Davies)

Unlike Pope St. Pius V's 16th century reform which consisted of a codification of an existing rite and was faithful to tradition, Pope Paul's 1960's Novus Ordo Missae (Novus Ordo Mass) was fabricated by a committee (with the assistance of Protestant 'observers') and constitutes an unprecedented, and radical, break with tradition. The revolutionary nature of the changes incorporated in the New Rite of Mass are striking, and as Cardinals Ottaviani and Bacci stated:

"[T]he Novus Ordo Missae - considering the new elements, susceptible of widely differing evaluation, which appear to be implied or taken for granted - represents, as a whole and in detail, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as it was formulated in Session XXI of the Council of Trent, which, by fixing definitively the 'canons' of the rite, erected an insurmountable barrier against any heresy which might attack the integrity of the Mystery."

It is clear that there are many differences between the New Rite of Mass and the 'Tridentine' Rite of Mass. Note: See above for more information on this topic. Further, in the decades since its imposition on the faithful, the New Rite of Mass has been plagued by numerous troubles - including liturgical abuse, sacrilege, doctrinal confusion, loss of faith, reduced Mass attendance, loss of the sense of the sacred, loss of fear of the Lord, loss of belief in the Real Presence, blurring of the distinction between the priest and laity, etc. Thankfully, however, the glorious 'Tridentine' Mass has been protected from such mistfortunes and remains as a valid option to faithful Catholics throughout the world. This incomparable Mass has been called "the Mass that will not die". Its history shows this to be true.

Misconception: It Goes Against the Second Vatican Council to Attend the Traditional Latin Mass

As indicated above, the Second Vatican Council never forbade the Traditional Latin Mass, but rather said that all lawful rites should be preserved and fostered: "Finally, in faithful obedience to tradition, the sacred Council declares that *Holy Mother Church holds all lawfully recognized rites to be of equal right and dignity, that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way.*" (Second Vatican Council, Sacrosanctum Concilium, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963, emphasis added)

Ironically, it is the New Mass itself that seems to contradict the directives of the Second Vatican Council. For example, the Council said: