Opinion
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by NCR Staff

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NCR contributor Stephen G. Adubato cautions Latin Mass detractors to take a step back and look at the other reasons people are drawn to this particular liturgy. In his essay, he describes how those who feel outcasted or alienated from parishes that only celebrate the ordinary form deserve to have their sensibilities and experiences taken into account.

Thanks to Stephen G. Adubato for his insightful essay.

We liberals say we are open-minded, and we wish conservative Catholics were more so. We'd like them to at least understand and respect our liturgical needs. Turns out they might want the same thing from us.

Fr. Andrew Greeley, a liberal by anyone's standards, approvingly used James Joyce's famous line from Finnegans Wake: "Catholic means 'Here comes everybody.' " Maybe our conservative friends who like more traditional worship (and maybe even theology) are just seeing if we agree with Greeley and Joyce — before we ask them to.

GREGORY F. AUGUSTINE PIERCE

Chicago, Illinois



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I appreciate Stephen G. Adubato's call for sensitivity to those people who find the traditional Latin Mass more to their liking and his desire for an alternative to the church's official liturgy. We Catholics are indeed a diverse group of people representing many personalities and cultures. On the other hand, I think Pope Francis is correct in naming the divisive nature of many of those who promote the Latin Mass.

I know many people who are in that camp. I am also old enough to remember when many of these same folks appointed themselves as "liturgy police" seeking out

anything they believed was a deviation —however minor — from the church's liturgy and reporting the pastors to their local bishops. I remember listening to a bishop complaining about being flooded by letters from these same people and their rigidity of mind and practice when it came to liturgy.

It strikes me as ironic that many of these intolerant folks are now insisting upon tolerance to follow their own version of Catholicism. If we can separate liturgical practice from a culture war mentality and have all Catholics commit themselves to the teachings of Vatican II, then I think there will be more room for flexibility in the church's liturgy.

BOB BARNES

Duluth, Minnesota

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In a rather rambling article, two items shout out to me.

First, Stephen G. Adubato quotes Ellie Rose as regards to personality type preferences, too long to quote here. As a heavily-leaning introvert, that is maybe precisely why active worship in a faith community draws me beyond silence.

It is in a faith community that I can be free to be who I am and called to be without apology, just as I am and with whom I can rejoice in the mystery (N type) that we celebrate as church, the body of Christ, sons and daughters of God. And, yes, faith is mystery — something that seems stunted in much of the ideological thinking.

Secondly, the quote of Mecha: In my mind that is problematic — "what goes on inside the church" ought not be separated from "what's going on outside the church." God is the whole of our lives and proclamation of his word is integral to our baptismal call. We are not called to be "Sunday Catholics."

Look what Jesus did between the Sabbaths of his life. And we might look at where he communed with the father outside the temple space as well as with whom he engaged in establishing the kingdom for which we pray: thy kingdom come!

MARY PAUKOVITZ

New Lenox, Illinois

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Although I agree with Stephen G. Adubato that ideologues are not the largest population of attendees of the extraordinary form of the Mass, I think there is still a tendency for that population to relish their exclusivity. The nature of the Tridentine Latin Mass, from my recollection as well as a personal encounter which I experienced only a few years ago, is that the attendees see themselves as people apart from the mainstream.

As an altar boy in the early 1960s, I served at Tridentine Latin Masses and recall vividly the difference between the seeming non-involvement of the parishioners then as compared to almost universal participation in the contemporary ordinary form. The post-conciliar church experience, from my viewpoint, promotes participation and allows the individual a feeling of belonging. It is unfortunate that in Adubato's experience the opposite seems true.

Although I respect the need for some individuals to spend their time at Mass in quiet contemplation, I think they are missing the larger picture and the spiritual need to be a part of a community. Although I do not believe the majority of Latin Mass aficionados are ideologues, there is a definite element which wishes to be separated from others on Sunday mornings. Among those they exclude are those with whom they have philosophical and likely political differences. Their posture reflects the same polarization we all experience in our everyday lives and it is unfortunate the church is their choice to express their need for separation.

CHARLES A. LE GUERN

Granger, Indiana

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As an altar boy serving daily Mass during the summer months at the New Jersey shore where religious order priests from throughout the mid-Atlantic states said Mass, I observed that most priests operated from the concept of *ex opere operato*, as though it were magic. It was almost a contest as to who could say the quicker Mass. In the meantime, individual Catholics were in their personal relationship with

God, praying the rosary, following the text in a missal or praying a novena.

As a young priest in the 1960s, although I love the Latin Mass and understood it thoroughly, I recognized the need for the vernacular. Unfortunately, the opposition to the changes of Vatican II were immediately opposed by the conservatives in Rome and in many regions of the United States. The failure of bishops and low clergy to understand and support the liturgical changes has resulted in the state of affairs that we experience today.

I can appreciate that some people can feel more connected to God through the Latin Mass. But I support Pope Francis and his decision to make it more difficult to celebrate the Latin Mass because it has become politicized.

I have been a member of a parish where the English mass has been celebrated beautifully, inspirationally and in the spirit of Vatican II. Unfortunately, most Catholics today have no idea what Vatican II was and is about. The papacies of Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI all obfuscated the works of the council.

The Latin Mass issue is unfortunately a small matter compared to the state of affairs that our episcopal leadership have created

BUD BRETSCHNEIDER

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