Opinion



by NCR Staff

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A recent conversation between actor Shia LaBeouf and Bishop Robert Barron did more than reveal the actor's conversion to Catholicism. It had a clear backdrop of masculine aggression, says commentator Madison Chastain. And Cardinal Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, says he would welcome a conversation with LaBeouf about his interest in the traditional Latin Mass. Following are NCR reader responses to this commentary that have been edited for length and clarity.

There's nothing inherently wrong with a person converting to Catholicism through an attraction to the 1962 Latin rite. Issues only arise if it turns out that person is only technically converting to the Catholic Church, and is in fact converting to a sectarian pseudo-Catholicism. I occasionally encounter such people online, converts to what they imagine is "true" Catholicism. Unbeknownst to them they are joining a "Catholicism" that is in informal schism.



In Shia LaBeouf's case, I've read that he was impressed by the Capuchins. I don't know the details of his conversion process at all, but perhaps he'll seek out a Capuchin parish rather than a parish that worships according to the 1962 Roman Missal. If he does select a parish that offers eucharistic celebrations according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, maybe the priest/priests of that parish will be orthodox and loyal to Pope Francis. Who knows?

To be honest, my first reaction upon hearing of LaBeouf's purported conversion was to hope that he doesn't become a religious fanatic and try to steer his wife, the superior actor of the couple in my opinion, into unserious Pure Flix garbage. Mia Goth has done a good job choosing roles and I see greatness in her future if she keeps it up.

JEFFREY JONES

Hamburg, New York

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I'm one of the rapidly diminishing fossils who experienced Mass in both forms — the Latin Mass as a server. I was in college during the Second Vatican Council.

While I never "got" the depth of the benefit of the Latin Mass at the time, I later came to realize that when travelling, wherever I attended Mass it was the same — a unity not felt when attending Mass in Spanish or Italian or other languages.

Although there is a Latin Mass church nearby, I have continued as a parishioner at my Novus Ordo parish, more out of habit than anything else.

I've been shocked by the devotion/attendance/activity at the Latin Mass parish and especially that it is mostly young families with children.

All Catholic bishops should welcome these parishes into their dioceses.

MARK KOENIG

Park Hills, Kentucky

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Cardinal Arthur Roche's openness to talk to newly-converted actor Shia LeBeouf shows a deep understanding of Pope Francis' teaching — that dialogue should cease to be a buzzword. There should be no untouchables in the church — even in the least expected places one might find inspiration or a good idea.

This holds especially true in the digital era, when the most aggressive or distressed users overwhelm every social media platform. It is wise to reach out in person and talk to the real people involved.

When I was a teenager, I perceived some suspicion against the charismatic movement: it was sometimes deemed chaotic and unruly, and disobedient to the hierarchy. Today these "traditional" movements are growing, and they are also perceived as disobedient. But just as the charismatics did, they might have something to offer. Even from a pure organizational marketing perspective, it could be useful to explore why they are growing while others are faltering. It may well be just a phase that will go out of fashion, but who knows?

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