

Message to TLM Crowd: Leave Card. Wuerl Alone

Michael Sean Winters | Mar. 15, 2011 | Distinctly Catholic

The Paulus Institute had planned to host a Traditional Latin Mass next month at the National Shrine here in Washington. Last year, you may recall, they had invited Cardinal Castrillon Hoyos to celebrate the Mass but he declined at the last minute after letters emerged in which he had praised a bishop for not cooperating with civil authorities regarding their investigation of a priest-predator. Bishop Slattery stepped in at the last minute and presided at the Mass. It was beautiful in its way, not my cup of tea anymore than a folk Mass is my cup of tea, but, hey, it's a big church.

This year, Archbishop J. Augustine DiNoia, of the Congregation for Divine Worship, was supposed to celebrate the Mass but he, too, at the last minute had to withdraw for what the press release from Paulus Institute termed "changed circumstances." Now, the Paulus Institute has cancelled the Mass entirely. Thus, began a flurry of activity at certain conservative blogs and the start of a conspiracy theory worthy of Oliver Stone.

The focus of this anti-TLM conspiracy theory is Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington. [Rorate-caeli ran an item](#) [1] entitled "While the spirit of Vatican II reigns supreme in the Archdiocese of Washington, Arlington continues to flourish." The blog post got picked up by the perennially hyper-ventilating [Father Zuhlsdorf](#) [2].

Well, if there was any doubt that the TLM-crowd has an agenda, there it is. Of course the spirit, and the letter, of Vatican II reigns supreme in Washington. Also in Rome where, quite conspicuously, the Holy Father has so far never celebrated the TLM in public. When Pope Benedict gave permission for the celebration of the TLM as a matter of course he did not intend to insult the Mass that most Catholics attend every Sunday and that he himself presides at when he celebrates Mass for the faithful. But, the TLM-boosters want to present the TLM as the preferred form, the true form, and to denigrate the ordinary form.

What is ironic is that in Washington the TLM has been celebrated for more than a decade at old St. Mary's church. Cardinals Hickey, McCarrick and Wuerl all permitted this celebration of the TLM, long before it was undertaken across the river in Arlington. To imply that Cardinal Wuerl is somehow opposed to the celebration of the TLM is ridiculous. Cardinal Wuerl, like Pope Benedict, however, is not engaged in the promotion of the TLM at the expense of the ordinary form. For this he is castigated.

It is unclear what the Paulus Institute meant when it cited "changed circumstances." Archbishop DiNoia, of course, has a day job and a rather busy one at that. His congregation must deal with the implementation of the new translation of the Missal. They are busy dealing with the imminent transfer of jurisdiction over annulments in which the marriage was not consummated from their congregation to another diocese. And, the entire curia is busy getting ready for the forthcoming beatification of Pope John Paul II, which is expected to bring millions of people to Rome. But, to suggest that somehow Cardinal Wuerl was behind this is nonsense.

As I say, it is a big church and there is plenty of room for the TLM crowd. But, they should leave my archbishop alone. Cardinal Wuerl did not cancel the Mass, the Paulus Institute did. Painting him as the big bad anti-TLM prelate is an injustice and, so far as the record demonstrates, it is also false.

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Links:

[1] <http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2011/03/while-spirit-of-vatican-ii-reigns.html>

[2] <http://wdtprs.com/blog/page/2/>