

still faced eastward and did not turn in towards each other (e.g. the lay persons had their backs to the altar). In any event, such cases were not the general practice. As Davies points out:

"[A]t no time in the history of the Church have altars ever been constructed specifically to facilitate a celebration facing the people. As I have already shown, there is no precedent in the liturgical books for such a construction. The only way the people as an act of consecration to the altar. The practice constitutes a radical break with Tradition, and has been invested with an anti-sacrificial significance since its adoption by Protestants as a sign that they believe their Lord's Supper to be no more than a commemorative meal."

Those who point to examples such as St. Peter's as "proof" of the practice of Mass facing the people should take note of the following:

"It has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt that from the time the Christians were first allowed to build churches, the apse containing the altar at the east end and the entrance the west; in others this procedure was reversed. By the end of the fourth century almost every church building in the East had the apse at the east end, and by the second half of the fifth century, this was also the case in the West. But, even where the altar was situated at the west end of the church, Mass was still celebrated facing the East, and so the altars of these churches were constructed in such a manner that the priest could stand on the west side in order to celebrate Mass facing the East. This arrangement can still be seen in such basilicas as St. Peter's in Rome, and it is Mass facing the people as a practice of the early Church. But surely, it might be argued, if the celebrant stood on the west side of the altar, as he would have done in St. Peter's Basilica, then Mass must have been celebrated facing the people. Not at all. The ancient practice in churches where the apse was at the west end was as follows: the congregation did not stand directly in front of the altar but on either side of the nave, the men on one side and the women on the other. During the first part of the Mass, the Mass of the Catechumens, the congregation would face the celebrant in order to hear the readings and the homily. But East. Ancient liturgical contain directions for the congregation to face the East, or as the instruction Lord (conversus ad Dominum) expressed, to turn toward the Lord (conversus ad Orientem). Turning toward the East, were synonymous... The construction of the altar in such basilicas as St. Peter's was, then to make possible a Mass facing the East and not a Mass facing the people." (Davies)

By facing the east, the direction of the rising sun, we are facing the direction which symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem and in the direction in which Christ is expected to return. Furthermore, it should also be noted that Our Lord had faced the west while redeeming mankind upon the cross and by looking towards the east we are actually facing Him because the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present during the Mass." (Davies)

As Davies states:

"The adoption of the eastward direction for worship by Christians also represented a reaction against the Jewish practice of turning towards Jerusalem to pray. The East symbolized the heavenly Jerusalem in contrast with the earthly Jerusalem of the Jews. The Christians of antiquity found a rich and seemingly inexhaustible symbolism in the eastward direction. Christians worshipped not the sun king but the King of the sun, because the sun itself was created by Christ. Our Lord had faced the West while offering the Eucharist. The Mass was actually facing Him. Eastward during the Mass we are actually facing Him because the Sacrifice of the Cross is made present during the Mass. St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the eastward direction symbolized both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained. Paradise had been situated in the East, and so by worshipping in this direction we symbolize our desire to regain Paradise, the heavenly Paradise represented by the East. There are also traditions that just as the birth of the Messiah was heralded by a star in the East... His Second Coming will be like lightning coming from the same direction (Mt. 24:27)... There is also a tradition that the Second Coming will take the form of a lightning bolt striking the East. When the eyes of the East are opened and people will be prepared to receive Our Lord in an attitude of adoration."

Furthermore, when the priest faces eastward, he also faces the Lord directly and really - in the tabernacle. In fact, turning the priest around to face the people in the Novus Ordo Mass necessitated removing the tabernacle - containing Our Lord - from the altar. As Pope Pius XII has said: "To separate the Tabernacle from the Altar is tantamount to separating two things which, of their very nature, must remain together."

Those who criticize the traditional orientation of the priest are criticizing nearly the entire history of the Church and are criticizing the Eastern rites. They may fail to realize that what occurs at the altar is mysterious and does not need to be seen by the people (note that "the solemn moments of the Eastern liturgy are conducted behind the iconostasis and not seen by the people at all"). They may fail to realize that "clearly seeing what occurs at the altar does not increase our attention - but over time, attention from it may be reduced." They should also reflect on the fact that one cannot actually see the Transubstantiation occurring. They may have never reflected on the fact that the priest may be distracted by the actions of the people and the people may be distracted by the expressions and mannerisms of the priest. Also, it is fitting that we should not see the face of the priest, since the priest acts in the place of Christ.

Finally, it should be noted that it is fitting that the priest, who reconciles sinful man with his offended God (cf. Mt. 16:19; Mt. 18:18) be focused on God, rather than on man:

"It should now be apparent how fatuous it is to speak of the priest as being in the middle between the people. During Mass the priest stands between the people and the mediator between God and man, the outermost representative of humanity, standing at the very point where heaven and earth come together when God the Son is brought down upon the altar as our Sacrificial Victim (hostia). The priest is also like a shepherd in eastern countries. He does not need to drive his flock from behind, to watch them lest they stray. [He] walks before them, leading them to green pastures [for the safety of their fold]. They know him and he knows them. But Catholics at worship today no longer look outwards and upwards to heaven, no longer fix their hearts and minds upon Our Lord. Our Lord is no longer the center of their being. They are being symbolized, rather than the turning round of the altar that turned in upon themselves, priest and people can fix their minds upon each other." (Davies)

"There is a certain fittingness in adoring towards the east. First, because the Divine majesty is indicated in the movement of the heavens which is from the east. Secondly, because Paradise was situated in the east according to the Septuagint version of Genesis 2:8, and so we signify our desire to return to Paradise. Thirdly, on account of Christ's rising in the light of the East. Fourthly, because the heaven of heavens is to the east (Psalm 68:33), and is expected to come from the east, according to Matthew 24:27. As lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church and 'greatest theologian in the history of the Church')

"This practice is symbolic of a shepherd leading us. It is not that the priest is turning his back to the people, but that we are all facing the east. We turn to the Lord together. It is also clear that that facing Eastward has been the constant tradition of the Church. This has been confirmed many times by archaeological evidence. Remember, this novelty of the priest facing the people was originally an invention of Martin Luther.

"Perhaps the most dramatic symbol of the man centered nature of the new liturgy is the turning round of the altar, or rather, its replacement by a table, the manner in which Mass was celebrated before the Council, with priest and people together on the same side of the altar facing east, was an effective symbol of the heavenly orientation of the traditional liturgy. It is now an inward-looking celebration. Man has turned away from God to face his fellow men." (Davies)

Misconception: There is Too Much Kneeling in a Traditional Latin Mass

There is more kneeling in the 'Tridentine' Mass (especially a low Mass) than in the Novus Ordo (New Order) Mass of the 1960's - however a better question may be "Why is there so little kneeling in the Novus Ordo Mass?". In fact, some parishes have even been built without kneelers! In other places, persons have been told not to kneel at certain points of the Mass even when the Holy Eucharist is present. In at least one area, those who continued to kneel at "forbidden times" were told that the "disobedience of kneeling" was a "mortal sin". Some were kicked out of positions in the parish for such "egregious sins". As to why such things occur and why there is so little kneeling in the Novus Ordo Mass, one can only be left to contemplate what possible reasons may account for it - e.g. is it to please Protestants who reject the Real Presence? Is it to promote the 'meal' concept? etc. Surely it cannot be to promote piety or to please God! Jesus himself knelt in prayer. The Apostles knelt. Scripture tells us to kneel. The Saints and Popes knelt. Etc.

"Enter, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the LORD who made us." (Ps. 95:6)

* Has been widely (and even publicly) criticized by orthodox prelates

* Generally fails to produce converts

* Often has little to no distinction between the sacred and the profane

* Often makes God our 'equal' (e.g. focusing on the community rather than God, placing the Holy Eucharist in one's (unconsecrated and unwashed) hands, etc.)

* Can be manipulated for social or political ends

* Removes explicitly sacrificial prayers - Note that the Protestant 'Reformers' tend to parallel those removed by the Protestant 'Reformers' of the 16th century.

* Often suffers from profanation and sacrilege

* Has no mystery ["The vernacular has robbed the Mass of its majesty and mystery" (George Mackey Brown, *Famous Catholic Converts*)]

* Is a break with tradition

* Tends to place exterior participation over interior participation

* Fails to give the Holy Eucharist the highest degree of veneration

* Is often not reverent

* Eliminates explicitly sacrificial prayers

* Uses a modern translation of the Bible (which, by the way, does not contain the actual word "hell").

* Is not conducive to the proper dispositions for Mass - Rather, it appears that the truest things from most attendees' minds are facts such as: that they are at the re-presentation of Calvary, that their sins caused the death of Christ on the Cross, that they are supposed to offer themselves up as victims, that their sins are a grave matter in need of Christ's forgiveness, that their sins are about to receive the infinitely Holy God, that they will face a fearsome Judge, etc. Or what should we especially think during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Of the sufferings and the death of Jesus Christ (who is made present on the altar). (Catechism of St. John Neumann)

* Fails to make priests' special power clear ["Not a word is said, no recovery, about the priests' power as 'sacrificer', his consecration, action or power, immediately after the brings about the Eucharistic presence. He now appears as nothing more than a Protestant 'minister.' (Cardinals Ottaviani & Bacci)]

* Fails to foster a pkenal spirit - rather, it seems to speak, "I'm okay, you're okay." As Pope St. Gregory the Great has said, "The Lord certainly does not spare the criminal because He will not leave the crime unavenged. For either the man repents his crime and punishes himself, or God vindicates it with the man and strikes him. Neither, therefore, is sin spared, because never is it forgiven without having been avenged." (Pope St. Gregory I the Great, *Doctor of the Church*, 6th century, A.D.)

* Fails to foster a spirit of prayer - [The Novus Ordo Mass almost never produces an atmosphere conducive to personal prayer. In fact, it can be nearly impossible to offer personal prayers at certain times during the Mass (and even before and after Mass) due to the constant chatting, noise, loud music, frequent distractions, proscriptions against kneeling, etc. And, in some cases, personal prayer may even be explicitly discouraged during Mass. "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'" (Our Lord Jesus Christ, Lk. 19:46)]

* Has been charged with the undermining of Catholic dogma (e.g. in the Real Presence, in the Hierarchical priesthood, etc.)

* Promotes 'liturgical pluralism'

* Has been plagued with inaccuracies (e.g. in the Creed, in the consecration)

* Has a novel form of consecration which may lead to the danger of invalid consecrations. (Note that not only is the form of consecration different from the Traditional Mass, but the entire consecration is treated as part of a prayer rite [the "In studio Masses"]). Further, the consecration is no longer highlighted with special typography (e.g. no large letters, no capitals, no red ink, etc.) or marked off, but instead is

"apparently part of a historical context". Especially it should be noted that when the consecration is part of a narrative, there is a greater danger of invalid consecrations - if a priest recites the prayer as a mere narrative, his intention may be defective, resulting in no consecration whatsoever (for a valid consecration, the priest must have the desire to consecrate in the here and now, and not merely read out Our Lord's past actions.)]

* Has resulted in numerous liturgical abuses - including invalid masses (e.g. Masses with no consecration - in some cases, this has continued for years) ["If one thing has been consistent in the New Rite of Mass, it is liturgical abuse."]

* Has selectively chosen Scripture passages which usually omit references to the supernatural (e.g. miracles) as well as 'negative' references (e.g. hell, Jesus' spoke more frequently on so-called negative topics than on positive topics).

* Still think there's no big difference? Consider that even the chief architect of the New Mass referred to the liturgical reforms as "a major conquest of the Catholic Church" (Archbishop Bugnini, suspected Freemason)

Furthermore, Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI said, "I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy."

"Anyone who is not stubbornly determined to close his eyes and ears to what is happening throughout the Church in the West today must concede that the celebration of the New Mass is characterized almost invariably by banality, and only too often by irreverence and even sacrilege." (Davies)

"... in the place of liturgy as the fruit of development came fabricated liturgy. We abandoned the organic living process of growth and development over the centuries, and replaced it - as in a manufacturing process - with a fabrication, a banal, on-the-spot product." (Cardinal Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI)

"What was intended by Vatican Council II as a means of making the liturgy more easily understood by the average Christian, has turned out to be something more like an orgy of stripping it of all sense or reverence, bringing it down to the changes we were made on the part of the product of the boredom with the banality of the result." (Archbishop Dwyer)

"[The common denominator in the changes] is the aim of bringing Catholic worship into conformity with that of the Protestant sects...the present liturgical revolution, while not identical with the Protestant 'Reformer' Crammer's, has more than sufficient parallels to outrage any Catholic who loves the Faith." (Davies)

"The new liturgy was simply not formed by saints, homines religiosi, and artistically gifted men, but has been worked out by so-called experts, who are not at all aware that in our time there is a lack of talent for such things. Today is a time of incredible talent for technology and medical research, but not for the organic shaping of the expression of the religious world. We live in a world without poetry, and this means that one should approach the treasures handed on from more fortunate times with twice as much reverence, and not with the illusion that we can do it better ourselves... The new liturgy is without splendor, flattened, and undifferentiated." (Von Hildebrand)

"Every injury offered to external worship, which is the great social link, is an injury to the interests of mankind. Even if there were not the word of God for it, it is not just that such a consequence should follow." (Dom Gueranger)

"Was it not Luther who said that if the Mass was destroyed Roman Catholicism would be done for?" (A. Von Hildebrand)

Note: For a more extensive comparison between the old and new rites of Mass, see MyCatholicSource.com.

The Desire for the Traditional Mass - a Mere 'Preference'?

Oftentimes the desire for the traditional Latin ('Tridentine') Mass is seen as a mere preference or attachment. Some may believe it has something to do with being resistant to change or about one's personal likes. Many think the two Masses are the same, except for the language. Sadly, those who think such things are very misinformed. The truth is that the two Masses are significantly different, even if said in the same language, and that many (most?)