

Ask Fr. James

Is the Tridentine or Latin Mass still Permissible in the Church today?

The Vatican II document on the liturgy (Sacrosanctum concilium, 1963) introduced the use of vernacular in Mass. It says:

“The use of the Latin language, with due respect to particular law, is to be preserved in the Latin rites. But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives, and in some prayers and chants” (SC #36).

Thus, in 1969 Pope Paul VI promulgated a new Roman Missal (Ordinary Form) as a symbol of the changes embodied and envisaged in the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, allowing the Missal to be translated into the different languages of the world.

However, the late Archbishop Lefebvre and the members of the Society of St. Pius X contended that the use of vernacular languages instead of Latin has broken down Catholic unity. In addition they demanded a return to the "Latin Bible," the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome, instead of dangerous "ecumenical" versions. They got some followership.

Recognizing that some Catholics still wanted to celebrate the Tridentine Mass, in 1988, with the motu proprio, *Ecclesia Dei* Pope John Paul II, asked individual bishops to establish places where Mass could be said using the 1962 Tridentine Missal but priests must have the bishop's permission to celebrate it. However, Pope Benedict XVI, by his July 7, 2007 motu proprio; *Summorum Pontificum*, loosened the restrictions on churches or priests that want to celebrate the Tridentine Latin Mass.

In that Mass, the priest faced away from the congregation and said many of the prayers inaudibly but the scripture lessons and homily can be delivered in English, and Gregorian chant used as part of the liturgy. Mass in the Vernacular allows for more active participation of all the people at Mass.

The Archdiocese of Regina allows one of our parishes, St. Mary's Regina to celebrate the Tridentine Mass once a month and we encourage anyone who feels drawn to it to attend. We are not able to allow more parishes do so because of lack of priests who have Latin language competencies.

You may email/send your faith questions to Fr. James and he would answer them in our Sunday Bulletins.