

# Why the Latin Mass

1. What do you mean when you say that Our Lady Of The Sun Church is a traditional Roman Catholic parish?

Our Lady Of The Sun Catholic Church is a traditional Roman Catholic parish. At Our Lady Of The Sun Catholic Church only the traditional Latin Mass is offered. This is not because we are simply old-fashioned and prefer the reverent atmosphere of the ancient liturgy to that of the more casual services which have become the norm today. Nor have we chosen to retain the traditional Mass out of stubbornness or disobedience. Rather, we act in obedience to past infallible teachings of the Catholic Church. We have kept the Latin Mass because it is the Catholic thing to do.

2. Why is the traditional Latin Mass so important to you?

The Traditional Latin Mass safeguards the Catholic Faith. Pope Pius XII taught that the sacred liturgy is intimately bound up with the truths of the Catholic Faith, and therefore must conform to and reflect these truths — so much so that the liturgy actually serves as a safeguard of the integrity of the Faith (Mediator Dei). For this reason, the the Church has always carefully protected the text of the Mass in order to prevent doctrinal errors from creeping into the liturgy. The traditional Latin Mass is, then, a perfect expression of the unchanging truths of the Catholic Church

Even the Protestant reformers recognized the connection between Church teaching and the Mass. Luther felt that by overthrowing the Mass, he would overthrow the papacy. He and other Protestant reformers made it a point to eradicate the idea of sacrifice from their “reformed” liturgies. Altars and crucifixes were removed, and Scripture readings and sermons replaced the concept of the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. This was done gradually, so that Catholics, who, after all, were going to the same churches and often had the same pastors, were hardly aware that they were little by little becoming Protestants.

Since the early 1960’s, many of these same changes were gradually introduced into Catholic churches. Then in 1969, the Mass was rewritten by a Vatican commission assisted by six Protestant theologians. No references to the Mass as a sacrifice remain in the new liturgy, which is defined as “the memorial of the Lord” and closely resembles a Protestant service. The New Mass is not an expression of the traditional Catholic Faith but of a new ecumenical religion.

### 3. How old is the traditional Latin Mass?

The beginnings of the Roman Mass are found in the writings of St. Justin (150 A.D.) and St. Hippolytus (215 A.D.) By 250 A.D. the Mass was being said in Latin throughout most of the Roman world, and the Latin Canon as we know it was completed by 399 A.D. While the Mass has remained essentially the same from the days of the Apostles, it was codified in its present form by Pope Pius V in the sixteenth century.

### 4. What does “Tridentine” mean?

The word “Tridentine” is simply a reference to the fact that the Latin Mass was codified by Pope St. Pius V shortly after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), from which is derived the term “Tridentine.” Contrary to what some people think, Pope St. Pius V did not issue a new Mass but simply unified the already existing liturgy. His Quo Primum decree not only declared that this Mass was to remain unchanged for all time, but it forbade the introduction of new Mass liturgies.

### 5. Why is the Mass offered in Latin?

The Mass is offered in Latin because it is a “dead” language. As it is no longer spoken as the vernacular language in any country today, Latin words do not change in meaning. The English language we speak may be easier to understand, but because of slang, colloquialisms and various local influences, the words we use vary in their meanings from place to place and year to year. As Pope Pius XII explained, “The use of the Latin language... is a manifest and beautiful sign of unity, as well as an effective antidote for any corruption of doctrinal truth” (Mediator Dei). As for the difficulty of not understanding Latin, most missals display the English translation side-by-side with the Latin text. Even children learn to use them with ease and soon know by heart even many of the Latin prayers.

### 6. Shouldn't the liturgy reflect the times and the culture of people?

For centuries, a Catholic could attend Mass anywhere in the world and always find it the same. Were it possible to travel in time, the same would still hold true: a Mass offered by an Catholic priest living in Rome in 570 would be nearly the same as that offered by one offered in the same city in 1570. Moreover, that Mass offered in 1570 would be the same as one offered by a priest living in Nagasaki in 1940 or here at Our Lady Of The Sun Catholic Church at present time and in the future. This fact reflects

clearly two of the four marks of the Catholic Church — its unity and catholicity, both in regard to location and time.

You may remember learning in your catechism as a child that the four marks of the Church are those clear signs by which all men can recognize the one true Church established by Christ. Only the Catholic Church possesses all four of these marks: it alone is one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic. It is one because all of its members profess the same faith, the same Sacrifice and Sacraments, and are united under the same authority. It is holy because it was founded by Jesus Christ, Who is all-holy, and because it teaches holy doctrines and provides the means of living a holy life. (Unfortunately, because of man's free will, not all Catholics make good use of those means.) It is catholic or universal because it is empowered to receive all men in all places and all times. Finally, it is apostolic because it was founded by Christ on the apostles and has always been governed by their lawful successors.

## 7. Isn't the Latin Mass unsuitable for modern man?

Some people object that they don't get much out of the traditional Latin Mass, that it is "boring" because they don't understand the Latin, that the priest doesn't make the service interesting by getting the people involved — that he even has his back turned to them most of the time, that there is no music or they would prefer more "upbeat," modern music, etc. What they forget is that the Mass is not meant to please man but to give glory to God. Worship is not a social gathering intended to give us a warm, fuzzy, neighborly feeling inside. It is an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty and His infinite perfections, and an expression of our submission to Him as creatures to their Creator and Lord. As the catechism teaches, the purposes for which Mass are offered are:

- a) first, to adore God as our Creator and Lord
- b) second, to thank God for His many favors
- c) third, to ask God to bestow His blessings on all men
- d) fourth, to satisfy the justice of God for the sins committed against Him.

The Mass is, moreover, the public worship offered by the entire Church to God through Jesus Christ Who, as the Eternal High Priest, offers Himself anew to His Eternal Father as He did on the cross. He is the Lamb of God, the spotless Victim Whose sacrifice takes away the sins of the world, "standing as it were slain" (Apoc. 5,6) — that is, offering to His Heavenly Father again the sacrifice of His life on the cross. The Mass, then, is the fulfillment of the prophecy: "From the rising of the sun

even to the going down...in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation” (Mal. 1:11).