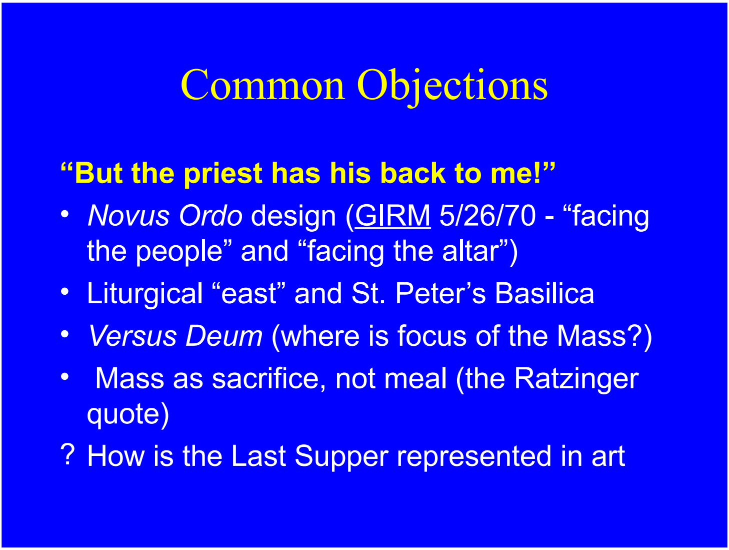
Questions? help@extraordinaryform.org

PART 5



Common Objections

"But the priest has his back to me!"

- *Novus Ordo* design (GIRM 5/26/70 - "facing the people" and "facing the altar")
- Liturgical "east" and St. Peter's Basilica
- *Versus Deum* (where is focus of the Mass?)
- Mass as sacrifice, not meal (the Ratzinger quote)

? How is the Last Supper represented in art

The *Novus Ordo* was designed for Mass to be said *versus Deum* not *versus populum*. There are three instructions (in the GIRM of 1970) to the priest in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that say "facing the people" because the priest is supposed to turn around in order to say:

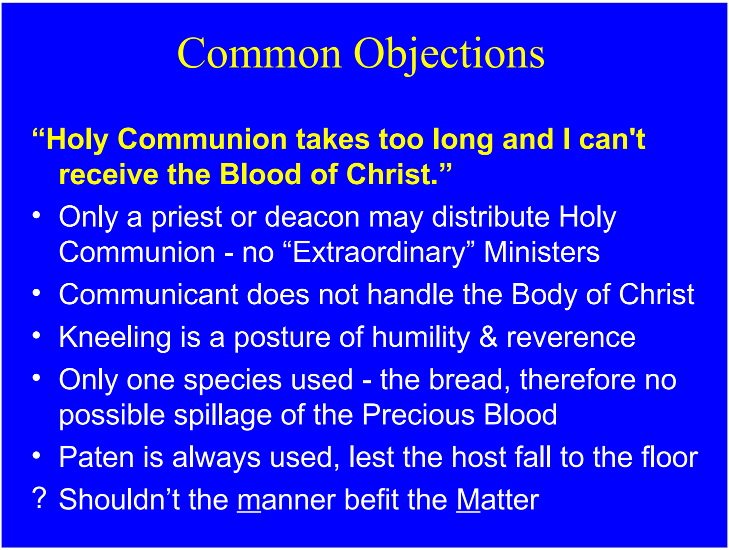
•"Pray brethren that my sacrifice and yours…."

•"This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world…."

•“The Lord be with you….” (followed by the final blessing)
The priest is also instructed (thankfully) to receive his own Communion “facing the altar.”

From The Spirit of the Liturgy by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger:
“In what direction should we pray during the Eucharistic liturgy? (p.76) … Because of topographical circumstances, it turned out that St. Peters faced west. Thus, if the celebrating priest wanted - as the Christian tradition of prayer demands - to face east, he had to stand behind the altar and look - this is the logical conclusion - toward the people… The liturgical renewal in our own century took up this alleged model…(p.77) This is, of course, a misunderstanding of the significance of the Roman basilica and of the positioning of its altar, and the representation of the Last Supper is also, to say the least, inaccurate. In the earliest days of Christianity, the head of table never took his place facing the other participants. Everyone sat or lay on the convex side of a C-shaped table, or of a table having the approximate shape of a horseshoe.The other side was always left empty for the service. Nowhere in Christian antiquity could anyone have come up with the idea that the man presiding at the meal had to take his place versus populum. The

communal character of a meal was emphasized by precisely the opposite arrangement, namely, by the fact that everyone at the meal found himself on the same side of the table....(p.78)… Now the priest …becomes the real point of reference for the whole liturgy….Less and less is God in the picture. More and more important is what is done by the human beings who meet here and do not like to subject themselves to a “pre-determined pattern”. The turning of the priest toward the people has turned the community into a self-enclosed circle. In its outward form, it no longer opens out on what lies ahead and above, but is locked into itself. The common turning toward the East was not a ‘celebration towards a wall’; it did not mean that the priest ‘had his back to the people’;….. For just as the congregation in the synagogue looked together toward Jerusalem, so in the Christian liturgy the congregation looked together ‘toward the Lord’….They did not lock themselves into a circle, they did not gaze at one another, but as the Pilgrim People of God they set off for the Oriens, for the Christ that comes to meet us …(p.80). A common turning to the east during the Eucharistic Prayer remains essential. This is not a case of something accidental but of what is essential. Looking at the priest has no importance. What matters is looking together at the Lord. It is not now a question of dialog, but of common worship, of setting off toward the One who is to come. What corresponds with the reality of what is happening is not the closed circle, but the common movement forward expressed in a common direction for prayer.” (p.81)



Common Objections

“Holy Communion takes too long and I can't receive the Blood of Christ.”

- Only a priest or deacon may distribute Holy Communion - no “Extraordinary” Ministers
- Communicant does not handle the Body of Christ
- Kneeling is a posture of humility & reverence
- Only one species used - the bread, therefore no possible spillage of the Precious Blood
- Paten is always used, lest the host fall to the floor

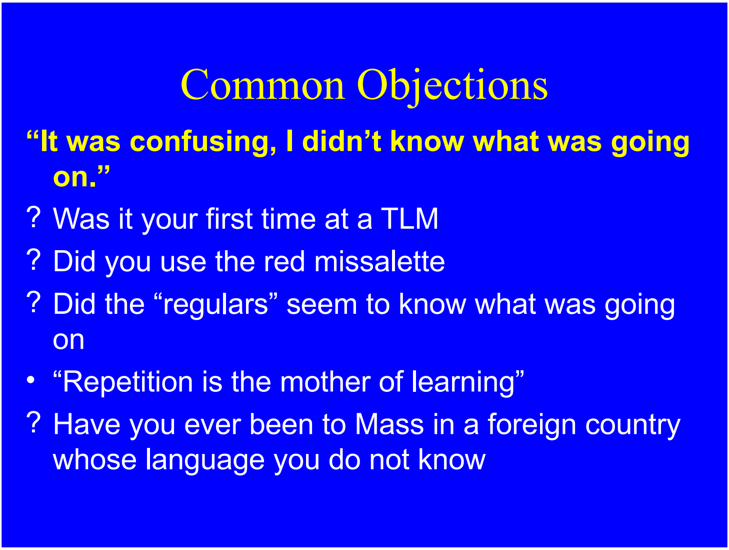
? Shouldn’t the manner befit the Matter

I have deliberately labeled Eucharistic Ministers as “Extraordinary Ministers” because that is what they were initially called. Their use was only to be under extraordinary circumstances, such as when the priest was infirm or the crowd was unusually large. Then, they became, like lectors, another convenient way of getting more actors into the action. In most *Novus Ordo* Masses I have attended, the large majority of them are women, as are the lectors. This, I think, is unfortunate. We need more priests, not more “Extraordinary Ministers”, and by saying anyone can distribute Holy Communion we effectively diminish, I believe, the exclusive relationship of the priest with Christ. This can discourage (male) vocations to the priesthood, and, potentially, encourage the heretical notion of a woman priest. (Remember, the priest acts *in personna Christi*.)

The priest washes his hands before the Consecration. The EM’s do not and we do not. Does it not also diminish the sense of the Real Presence when we allow hands like mine to touch Him?

Communion under both species is unnecessary for the efficacy of the sacrament. So why risk spilling the Precious Blood? This only extends the dishwashing after Holy Communion and gives us more of the not-so-extraordinary “ministers.”

The paten should always be used, but it is a rare exception in the *Novus Ordo*.



Common Objections

"It was confusing, I didn't know what was going on."

? Was it your first time at a TLM

? Did you use the red missalette

? Did the "regulars" seem to know what was going on

- "Repetition is the mother of learning"

? Have you ever been to Mass in a foreign country whose language you do not know

You cannot appreciate the TLM by going to one Mass and just watching. You have to read the prayers that are unchanging and try to understand them and then go to the TLM. Then go again and watch the actions, gestures, and posture of the priest and servers. Watch the choreography, the pace, and follow it not by reading the missal this time, but by noting the signs and the cues that will help you follow the Mass text in the future. Does this take an effort? Yes. And you will benefit to the extent that you make the effort.

The proverb, attributed by some to St. Thomas Aquinas, (any Russian students here?) even rhymes in Russian but is true in any language.

I have been to *Novus Ordo* Masses in Germany, Italy, and China. Only in Italy, because its language is not far removed from Latin, was I able to follow along reasonably well for the "Ordinary" parts of the Mass. Forget about the Liturgy of the Word, that was hopeless in all three places. My second Sunday in Beijing, China, I found a TLM. Think about it. In 1998, before Rome had freed the TLM, I was able to go to the "Mass of the Ages" in Communist China. And it was just like the TLM's that I was going to every Sunday in the US. I had my missal and I could understand everything but the homily. The sense of Catholicity and the Communion of Saints, of the Church universal through space and time was overwhelming. The Church had misplaced a great treasure. Pope Benedict found it again and would have the Catholic world embrace it again. It is worth of any and all effort you make to get used to it.

Common Objections

"I didn't get to participate like I'm used to doing."

? How many use the "Pray Together" booklets

? Has your mind ever wandered while waiting to make a response at Mass

- ? What do you mean by ‘participation’
- ? True/False: your participation = your attention
- ? True/False: your participation = your focus
- ? Is it harder to lose your attention / focus when reading
- ? How often do you hear (all of) EP #1

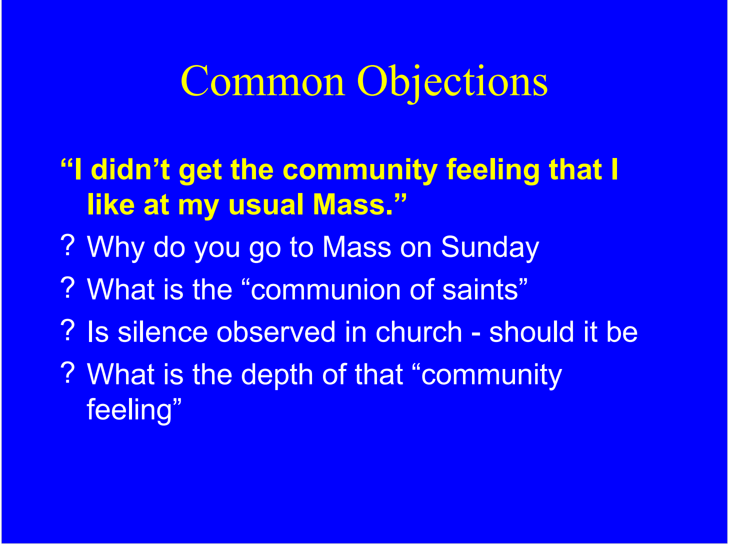
In most *Novus Ordo* Masses that I have attended, the people seldom use the missalette except, perhaps, to read along with the readings. (I do not see them use the booklets for the “Ordinary” parts of the Mass.) My point is that many seem to be just waiting for the next response they are supposed to make. The TLM requires you to focus on the content of the Missal, the text of the Mass. There are cues from the altar that you must watch for as you read the text: gestures from the priest, movements of the servers, bells, genuflections, etc.. The content of the TLM text is much richer than the *Novus Ordo*, especially since some of the things the priest says are not even printed in the *Novus Ordo* booklets. For me, the effort required to follow the TLM is more than paid in full by the resulting focus and attention to its beautiful prayers.

There is only one Eucharistic Prayer in the TLM and it is about 1600 years old. There is a variation (inferior due to its deviations, one of which is the Mystery of Faith problem) of it in the

Novus Ordo and that is Eucharistic Prayer number 1. But I rarely hear anything but Eucharistic Prayer number 2, by far the shortest of the four available in the *Novus Ordo*. The Eucharistic Prayer is the heart of the Mass. Yet the general practice in the *Novus Ordo* is to minimize this. Are we so busy that we only want to “participate” in the shortest of Masses?

From a paper submitted by then Cardinal Ratzinger to a congress on the liturgy at Fontgambault in July of 2001:

“The liturgy derives its greatness from what it is, not from what we make of it. Our participation is, of course, necessary, but as a means of inserting ourselves humbly into the spirit of the liturgy, and of serving Him Who is the true subject of the liturgy: Jesus Christ. The liturgy is not an expression of the consciousness of a community which, moreover is diffuse and changing. It is revelation received in faith and prayer, and its measure is consequently the faith of the Church, in which revelation is received.”



Common Objections

“I didn’t get the community feeling that I like at my usual Mass.”

? Why do you go to Mass on Sunday

? What is the “communion of saints”

? Is silence observed in church - should it be

? What is the depth of that “community feeling”

I hope that the main reason you go to Mass is NOT to get the “community feeling.” We have a “Sunday obligation” to go to Mass on Sunday because the Church says that’s how we fulfill the Third Commandment. But I would hope that you don’t go to Mass for that reason alone. Don’t we have a personal duty to publicly worship God - for the beauty of His creation, for our life as a part of that creation, for all the many blessings we have, chief among them our hope of salvation because the Son of God hung on a cross and died there?

(“Liturgy” is from a Greek word meaning public worship.)

The “community” that we profess belief in is the Communion of Saints: The Church Militant striving on earth, the Church Penitent in Purgatory, and the Church Triumphant in Heaven. These are all our “saints” because none of them have been condemned. The TLM acknowledges them before the first reading in every Mass when the priest kisses the altar: “We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of thy saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to pardon me all my sins. Amen”. Later, when the priest presents our gifts he says over the bread: “Receive, O Holy Father,….this spotless host, which I, Thine unworthy servant, offer unto Thee,…for all here present, and for all faithful Christians, whether living or dead, that it may avail both me and them to salvation, unto life everlasting. Amen” Isn’t it a greater service to your community to fervently say this prayer than to turn to those in the pew behind you and say “Peace be with you”? A similar invocation occurs over the wine, and then over both gifts he says: “Receive, O holy Trinity, this oblation offered up by us in honor… of all the saints, that it may avail to their honor and to our salvation; and may they…intercede for us in heaven.” These prayers are all gone from the *Novus Ordo*. Only in Eucharistic Prayer numbers 1 (“May their (all the saints) merits and prayers gain us your constant help and protection.”) and 3 (…and all your saints, on whose constant intercession we rely for help.) does the *Novus Ordo* even reference the Communion of Saints. (And how often do you hear either of these EP's?)

(Typically, we did not get through all of the "Common Objections" slides due to questions and digressions.)

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