

# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE LATIN MASSES APPROVED BY THE BISHOPS?

## CAN WE ATTEND?

*It is certainly true that there are many good priests who celebrate the traditional Latin Mass. However, there are a number of good reasons why it is wise to assess each case, and where issues like those below are a concern, it is better to only attend Masses celebrated by the Society of St. Pius X.*

**1. There may be doubts about the orthodoxy of certain priests.** In an era of unprecedented doctrinal confusion, the fact that a certain priest happens to celebrate the traditional Mass does not necessarily guarantee his orthodoxy. Diocesan priests who celebrate these “approved” Masses most likely underwent the same seminary formation as their peers who celebrate only the *Novus Ordo*, and they were likely infected with the same errors that are prevalent today. Although a lack of faith or orthodoxy on the part of the celebrant does not *per se* cast doubt upon the validity of his sacraments, validity is not the only concern: he may still preach heretical sermons or give otherwise unorthodox instruction. In fact, the faithful might be *more* inclined to trust him because he celebrates the traditional Mass, which makes it easier for him to transmit modernist attitudes to the faithful.

**2. These Latin Masses are usually celebrated in churches in which the *Novus Ordo* is also celebrated.** This means that one who attends the traditional Mass in these churches might be giving the impression of endorsing the dangerous idea that there are two forms of the Roman Rite, one ordinary and one extraordinary. Further, it is likely that people attending the *Novus Ordo* in that church were receiving communion in the hand, which means that there could be particles of the Sacred Host on the ground near the altar.

**3. Where will vocations go?** If the young people in these “approved” Latin Mass communities wish to discern a vocation, where will the priest advise them to go? Most likely, they will be sent to seminaries and convents in which the *Novus Ordo* is celebrated, where they will have to live among others unsympathetic or even hostile to Tradition. If not, they might be encouraged to enter “conservative” orders, such as the Fraternity of St. Peter, in which case they might still come into contact with the *Novus Ordo* and its corresponding mentalities. If a young man becomes a priest of the FSSP, what if his superiors send him to a diocese in which the priests have made an agreement with the local ordinary to concelebrate the *Novus Ordo* once a year?

**4. Where will your money go?** It is a commandment of the Church and a matter of justice that Catholics contribute financially to the priest who provides them with the sacraments. By contributing to these “approved” communities, you may be cooperating with revolutionary seminary training provided by the diocese and other questionable causes. Although you have a right under canon law to insist that your donations only be used for specific purposes, many modern priests and bishops are ignorant of the law or blatantly ignore it.

**5. The communities associated with these “approved” Latin Masses can often be hostile to the SSPX.** There are stories involving priests of these communities who have broken up families by telling parishioners that their marriages were invalid simply because they were celebrated in SSPX chapels prior to the Year of Mercy—despite the fact that the Roman Rota

has dismissed these types of cases, vindicating the SSPX's appeal to supplied jurisdiction. In fact, those who participate in formerly *Ecclesia Dei* communities are often the *most* hostile to the SSPX, which is unsurprising given that they were established specifically to counter the SSPX. Fighting and hostility among parishioners are impediments to building community and can be detrimental to one's spiritual life and peace of mind.

**6. There is the risk of developing a mentality that supports the “hermeneutic of continuity” with regard to the Second Vatican Council and the “reform of the reform” with regard to the *Novus Ordo* liturgy.** The fact that a priest celebrates the Latin Mass does not in itself guarantee that he is free from the logical fallacies espoused by “conservatives” who still believe that the Council itself was perfectly fine but merely misinterpreted, and that the *Novus Ordo* is legitimate in itself as long as there are no abuses. Although there are many non-SSPX priests who tend to agree with SSPX views on these questions, these priests are few and far in between, and most tend to fall into the “hermeneutic of continuity” or “reform of the reform” school of thought, including most of the superiors of these orders.

**7. These “approved” Latin Mass communities often hold to an erroneous view of obedience.** This explains not only why they are so hostile to the SSPX, but also why they continue to remain in a situation in which their very survival is dependent upon the good will of modernist Rome and the local bishops. Without understanding the fact that human laws must be rooted in divine law, one remains susceptible to every new error around the corner promoted by some authority. Although the SSPX is not *the* Church, it is the healthiest branch of the Church because it clearly understands that a true return to Tradition necessitates a supernaturally-oriented worldview and a rejection of false obedience.

The SSPX was established in 1970 as a society of common life, known today as a society of apostolic life, by the local ordinary of Fribourg. It was granted pontifical right through a *decretum laudis* of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in 1971. It possesses the right to incardinate priests, and this right remained intact following the invalid suppression of 1975, which was based on false pretenses and followed a highly irregular canonical process in which individuals were put on trial without their knowledge and judges were threatened with termination if they dared to hear appeals in favor of the SSPX.

Because the suppression was invalid, the seemingly illicit priestly ordinations and episcopal consecrations were in fact justified by the virtue of *epikeia*, as there was a need to continue fulfilling the Society's mission. This is the same principle that justifies keeping a certain distance from the local bishops by relying on supplied jurisdiction, apart from confessions, for which the Roman Pontiff has personally delegated jurisdiction, and marriages, which are authorized by the local ordinaries. Those who refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of these facts have likely fallen into the error of legal positivism, which exaggerates the scope of merely human authority and is rooted in naturalism, undermining the authority of God Himself.