

Kathryn McKelvey  
Volleyball  
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The use of vernacular in the Mass greatly benefits the congregation by increasing understanding and participation. By the use of vernacular, the faithful are able to understand the words of the celebrant and their own responses. This results in increased attention and ultimately growth in the faith. The Council of Trent recognized the importance that the congregation understands the Mass, but for various reasons did not deem it necessary to convert the Latin language being used to local languages. They instead stated that the priests should give instruction to the faithful throughout the Mass and explain the mystery of the sacrifice, especially on Sundays and other holy days of obligation. The Second Vatican Council determined that use of vernacular in the Mass could be very beneficial to the congregation and societal circumstances permitted that this change take place. Thus the Tridentine Mass evolved into the Novus Ordo Mass; and, along with some other alterations, the language used throughout the celebration was now the vernacular. (Bouley, 195)

I think that the decision to allow the Mass to be celebrated in the vernacular was appropriate and a very good change for the congregation. I have, of course, attended the Novus Ordo, or New Order, Mass my entire life. There have been several occasions; however, when I have attended a traditional Tridentine Mass at Old Saint Mary's church in Washington, DC. One of these instances was a High Mass celebrated for a wedding. It is not usual for people my age to have experience with this type of Mass. I am thankful that I have had the opportunity because it has increased my appreciation for the Mass in general and also for the changes that resulted from Vatican II. The Tridentine Mass is

very beautiful to witness but it is very hard to understand what is going on throughout the Mass. What I basically observed during the Mass was a group of people flipping through books, praying the rosary, taking part in other private prayer, or not paying attention at all. I cannot say I blame them, however, because it is very difficult to keep one's attention focused on something that he or she doesn't understand. Even if one does have a Missal with text printed in the vernacular, it is nearly impossible to follow along because the priest speaks only in Latin. At one Mass I was not even sure when the consecration was taking place until the priest raised the host. Mass in the vernacular clearly aids people in paying attention. It is easier to keep your mind focused on something when you can see and hear it.

The use of vernacular also aids in understanding the parts of the Mass. When one can understand and follow the language, he can understand and follow the ideas that the language is conveying. Hearing the parts of the Mass in the vernacular also allows the congregation to participate as a community. The New Order Mass is more like a dialogue amongst the congregation and when the people actually say the parts of the Mass it is much easier to comprehend the significance of what is taking place. Hearing the words of Christ through the priest allows one to understand the sacrifice that is taking place.

Improved attention and understanding throughout the Mass ultimately lead to an increase in faith and a closer relationship with God. While one does not go to Mass to get a "good feeling," the use of vernacular at least gives one the sense that he was actually at a holy sacrifice because he can participate and actively hear the words of the priest. My own experience tells me that it is much harder to remain faithful and to grow in one's faith when celebrating the Tridentine Mass. I would seem to walk away from the Mass

with nothing gained, because often it was hard to tell what type of religious ceremony I was attending.

I feel that the benefits of saying Mass in the vernacular are tremendous. It is better for the individual because he or she can understand what is happening and therefore can deepen her understanding of the significance of it all. It is better for the church as a whole, too because it creates a sense of community through the dialogue of the Mass. The priest speaks to the congregation, they speak to each other and all give thanks together. The Tridentine Mass is a beautiful part of Catholic tradition, but the Novus Ordo Mass said in the vernacular is even more beautiful in its ability to strengthen the faith of the congregation.