

THE MASS SERIES : PARTICIPATION IN THE LITURGY

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BACKGROUND

- **“Participatio”**
 - Pars (*part*) + captio (*take, possess*)
 - Sense of the Latin is to share, fulfill a role/part, or to impart
- We will try to discuss what “Participation” in the liturgy *should* look like, but first:
- **Why is “participation” in the liturgy required of a Catholic?**
 - The liturgy is a public act of the Church (the Mystical Body of Christ)
 - The Church as Mystical Body of Christ offers the prayers and sacrifice of the Son to the Father
 - Because liturgical prayer is an act of the Church, not an individual member, it is not necessary that anyone but those required for a valid liturgical service be present
 - 1. Essentially or formally complete without faithful “participating”**
 - Examples :
 - A priest, alone, without a server saying Mass still performs an act of the whole Church
 - A deacon alone saying his Breviary, prays in the name of the whole Mystical Body.
 - But because the Church is a society composed of individual members, there is something lacking when these members are not present.
 - 2. A material deficiency (not formal or essential) without faithful**
 - There are specific graces meant for those attending and participating
 - Examples :
 - A priest, alone, without a server saying funeral Mass would provide the deceased the same benefit if none of the deceased’s family attended, but obviously there’s something missing
 - COVID provided great examples of this kind of problem, and the distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics
 - Man is a social creature, and society itself as a creation of God, owes God not merely individualized prayer and worship, but communal worship (liturgy).
 - Mass (and liturgy) are the perfection of the Old Testament sacrifices, particularly the Passover Sacrifice and the Peace Offering for Thanksgiving.
 - These had an Offertory, Ritual killing, application of the blood, and communion/eating of the victim
 - Communion and application of the blood were necessary to receive benefit from the sacrifice. One was “excommunicated” if he did not eat.
 - Danger in not seeing this distinction between material/formal is to do what the Novus Ordo does in having different Masses for when people attend or do not (or when different groups, like children attend)
 - The liturgy (being the Church’s prayer) must remain the same no matter who is attending, to avoid man-centered focus
 - Nevertheless, men are meant to be a part of this.
 - Practically, too, if the Church did not demand some participation, we would not do it.

- **What kind of “participation” in the liturgy is required of a Catholic?**
 - **Two principles on being present at the liturgy:**
 1. Third Commandment : “Thou shalt keep the Lord’s Day Holy”
 2. First Precept the Church : To attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days (and rest from servile labor)
 - The Third Commandment is Divine Law, which must always be kept, even if attendance at Mass is impossible
 - Sundays and Holy Days must always be distinguished in some notable way
 - The Third Commandment does not say how
 - The Precept of the Church (a human law) specifies what we are to do, but since human law cannot foresee all situations, so there can be exceptions.
 - Thus, at a minimum, “attendance” at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is required (when not dispensed or it is physically or morally impossible to do so)
 - Physical impossibility : Distance (more than an hour of travel one way), relatively serious sickness, truly necessary work
 - Moral impossibility : Caring for a sick person, possible scandal to others
 - All those who have reached the age of reason are obliged (even if they have not been admitted to Communion.
 - Technically, all heretics and schismatics are also bound, but are rarely subjectively culpable for their absence.
 - **Bare minimum kind of attendance to avoid mortal sin :**
- **[Slide 1 : Minimum Degree of Participation – Step through as we discuss]**
 1. *Bodily presence within the church or immediate surrounding (“hear Mass”) so one is morally united with the celebrant*
 - In the vestibule, outside, or even in an adjoining building, provided one can “hear” what is happening (as much as the faithful in a church can).
 - Cry rooms or Parish hall for overflow is thus acceptable.
 - A broadcast or livestreamed Mass is not “attendance”
 2. *The entire Mass must be heard to avoid sin*
 - Mortal sin to miss from the Offertory to Communion of the Celebrant (the essential part) without a very serious reason.
 - Permitted to confess one’s sins (if necessary)
 - Permitted to take a misbehaving child out for discipline,
 - Not to go to the bathroom or take your kids there, go outside for a cigarette.
 - Venial sin to unreasonably miss any other part of the Mass or fail to prepare for the Mass or offer thanksgiving after.
 - We do have a duty to make a suitable preparation for Mass and thanksgiving afterwards.
 3. *The attendance must be **devout** not merely physical which includes:*
 - The intention to worship God, and
 - **Real attention to the ceremonies.**
 - “Digne, attente, ac devote” is how a priest must pray his Breviary – “in a dignified manner, with attention, and with devotion” — This seems also how one must attend Mass
 - Who would fail here:
 - The person scrolling through their phone

- The person who is at Mass but letting their mind wander or looking at or reading other things
 - Those who leave Mass to go to the bathroom (except a true emergency), go outside to chat or smoke
 - The parent who is so consumed with caring for a child they cannot pay attention to Mass
 - *but note, this parent in reasonably caring for a child would be absolved of any obligation through a moral impossibility, but that applies only if*
 - They are properly raising their children, providing suitable discipline, and training them to properly attend Mass.
 - So there is a necessity to care for the child (he's acting up, or so young that he cannot be expected to behave the whole Mass)
 - Most children, even in by age 2 or 3 can be made to stay quiet in church, and certainly by 4 or 5 to pay some attention.
 - If a parent does not raise the children correctly, and this is why they cannot focus on Mass and always need to take a child out, they may fail in their duty, because this inattention was preventable and their negligence is why we have the inattention.
- **History of How Catholics Participate at Mass**
 - We Romans are quite liturgically ignorant.
 - The vast majority (over 98%) of Catholics are Latin Rite, and ignorant of the other rites, all of which originate from the same early Apostolic rites.
 - These Eastern Churches provide at least some context for understanding our own
 - In the East there was always an participation of laity and clergy together in the liturgy, principally through singing the appropriate responses and hymns, still to this day.
 - In the Eastern Churches, concelebration was common (one liturgy with many priests who all offered the liturgy together) with plenty of those in minor orders and the clergy to provide for daily Sung liturgies.
 - There is no “Low Mass” equivalent in any Eastern Catholic Rite until the post-conciliar revisions of some Eastern Rites, and even then most are still sung.
 - In the West, concelebration became restricted to ordinations, and instead individual priests started saying Mass daily, making singing the Mass impossible
 - Thus developed the Low Mass (Missa Privata) for use by priests *privately*.
 - The priest would assume all of the parts for the ministers
 - The acolyte would make the responses and transport the various items
 - Public Masses in the Middle Ages were still typically sung, except perhaps in remote churches where this was not possible

- In major churches, monasteries, and Cathedrals there were religious who were bound to the Divine Office and a Conventual Mass (so ministers and singers were available for even daily Sung Masses)
 - Eventually, the Low Mass began to take over even in public places (thanks in part to the proliferation of smaller country and small village churches.
 - Practically, this also made much of our missionary work possible.
 - In the West, with the development of musical styles that were unsingable by the average faithful, the almost total loss of Gregorian Chant, and the increase in Low Masses for public Masses, the faithful were relegated to being silent spectators.
 - Starting with Dom Guéranger and then with Pope St. Pius X and his successors there was an demand to restore the former participation of the faithful in various ways.
 - Unfortunately, due to both resistance and the resulting perversion of the Liturgical Movement a false kind of “active lay participation” in the New Rites developed, which many (falsely) associate with the good work St. Pius X called for.
- **Types of Masses and Participation**
 - **The Solemn Mass is the model for the liturgy, and the normative form of the Mass**
 - This requires at least a schola cantorum of clerics
 - It requires at least five acolytes/servers plus three major ministers (priest, deacon and subdeacon)
 - The practice in the West of each priest saying Mass each day is impossible with a Solemn Mass for each.
 - A bishop, until 1964 was not allowed to celebrate a Solemn Mass, only a Pontifical Mass (either a Pontifical Solemn Mass at the throne or faldstool, or a Pontifical Low Mass)
 - And the Papal liturgy was even more complex, requiring Greek Deacons, various noble guards, extra priests, seven acolytes, etc.
 - So, a Solemn Papal Mass was rare (maybe once or twice a year)
 - On account of the complexity of the ceremonies this is why the Popes would typically offer Low Masses (thus why Benedict XV and Pius XI could offer a Dialog Mass for various events)
 - **The Sung Mass, as common as it is now, was only permitted in the 19th century.**
 - At first it was permitted without incense, because the priest must incense the *oblata* and this is dangerous without the deacon holding and protecting these.
 - Later, it was allowed with incense, but it still requires at least a schola plus the same servers as a Solemn Mass, just no deacon and subdeacon.
 - These missing parts are assumed by the priest and servers
 - As above, until 1964 a bishop’s Sung Mass was not permitted.
 - **The Low or Recited Mass developed mostly out of the saying of private Masses by each priest every day, where singing was impossible**
 - Out of practicality, this became the most common form of Mass outside of monasteries, and cathedrals (which had resident clergy to sing the offices and Masses) and the larger churches (where there was often a choir).
 - Here there are at most two servers (four for a bishop’s Low Mass, two being clerics, one of whom must be at least a subdeacon)
 - The priest recites all prayers, uses no incense, and takes on even more functions from the missing servers and ministers

- **“Participatio actuosa”**
 - “actuosa” is a very interesting word in Latin
 - Typical meaning can range from “full of activity” to “passionate” or “with vehemence”
 - Despite the translation as “active participation” we do not mean merely external activity (activism), but principally interior attention and union with the liturgy, though some exterior activity is necessary, and naturally flows from the interior.
 - The true meaning of this phrase is the “real attention” and devout attendance that is required of Catholics at Sunday Mass or on Holy Days of Obligation.

PARTICIPATIO ACTUOSA

- **“Active Participation”**
 - [Slide of Vatican II : Sacrosanctum Concilium Quote]
 - We find that “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (Vatican II on liturgy) mentions this phrase 13 times, and clearly continues to emphasize this
 - Why would a priest of the SSPX be bring up *Sacrosanctum Concilium*?
 - Many in the traditional world object to the congregation singing or making responses at Mass because they think this was a Modernist or Protestant concept.
 - **They are not wrong in how it was intended by some of those who hijacked the Liturgical Movement.**
 - *In the Novus Ordo Mass and milieu, the phrase was used to justify an attack on the essential distinction between the ordained priest (who exists for sacrificial intercession) and the “priesthood of the faithful” where by dint of baptism can intercede for others, repair, and merit for them.*
 - *Is this what the phrase and idea meant, though?*
 - But, just because some phrase was used or idea promoted by those we object to, doesn’t mean the phrase or idea is objectionable in itself.
 - Danger of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater”
 - Example in modern parlance : Synodality is objectionable, but the church held many “Synods” which are not in traditional times. In fact, even “Councils” were typically called “Synods”.
 - Need to address the idea (or its perversion), not the words used, though maybe there’s a better way to say things or understand.
- **Origins of the phrase “active participation” are not Vatican II, but Pope St. Pius X**
 - [Slide of St. Pius X : Tra le sollecitudini Quote in Italian]
 - In *Tra le sollecitudini* on Sacred Music, Pius X uses, in the Italian **original, written by Pius X himself**, “partecipazione attiva”
 - *We know it was Pius X who wrote it himself, because it matches in many places word-for-word his previous documents as Patriarch of Venice (the *Votum* of 1893, for example, or his 1894 Letter the clergy of the Archdiocese of Venice)*
 - This was later Latinized to merely “participatio” in the Latin translation (which is not the original, nor the official version),
 - and some will try to argue it is, and thus translators tried to corrupt it and introduce
 - The Latin version was published much later, and only the Italian was officially published in the *Acta Sancta Sedis*.
 - Every other translation has “active participation”
- [Slide I of St. Pius X : Tra le sollecitudini Quote in English]

We deem it necessary to provide before anything else for the sanctity and dignity of the temple, in which the faithful assemble for no other object than that of acquiring this spirit from its foremost and

indispensable font, which is the **active participation** in the most holy mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church. (St. Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*, §9.)

- The point being, if Pope St. Pius X was no Modernist, yet called for “active participation”, then there must be an orthodox manner in understanding this, even if the term and concept were abused to confuse the distinction between the ordained priesthood and the so-called “priesthood of the faithful”
 - Avoid knee-jerk reactions to orthodox things simply because something correct or, in itself harmless, was co-opted.
 - In particular, avoid confirmation biases—where we presume some understanding of how we have seen some older generation do something means it is “traditional” or “orthodox”
 - I recall a sarcastic “demotivational” poster about “Tradition” with the running of the bulls on it, reading: “Just because we’ve always done it that way doesn’t mean it’s not incredibly stupid.”
 - When we spoke before about rubrics and the Sacred Congregation of Rites, we noted that they were created to solve questions about abuses in the liturgy precisely because even in the “good old times” people were not doing things in accordance with good sense, or good Catholic liturgical principles.
 - For example, the SRC had to forbid using record players, audio recordings, or player-piano type organs during the liturgy in place of a choir.
 - The SRC also strictly forbids the use of the organ or instrumental music in the offices and Masses for the dead, and during Advent and Lenten Sundays and ferial days, but despite this, it is still often done in traditional circles.
 - The point is, while there is a Catholic sense, we should not immediately think what was “done before” is “traditional” or in agreement with the Catholic spirit. Many Catholics before 1960 did bad things.
- **What does Pope St. Pius X mean by “active participation”?**
 - In the Motu Proprio, St. Pius X desires the use of Gregorian chant be restored to the faithful:
- **[Slide 2 of St. Pius X : Tra le sollecitudini Quote in English]**

“Special efforts are to be made to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant by the people, so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times.”

 - In passing, the Italian uses “parte più attiva” (“a more active part)
 - The Latin is very nerdy (and shows it was a later translation from the Italian here)

“Praesertim apud populum cantus gregorianus est instaurandus, quo vehementius Christicolae, more maiorum, sacrae liturgiae sint rursus participes.”

 - “est instaurandus” is a gerundive periphrastic, which indicates a necessity or obligation, not merely a wish, so “Gregorian chant is to be [in the sense of a duty or obligation] restored to the use of the people.
 - Second to note here, is the resultant clause that follows “quo” + the subjunctive “sint”, which indicates the purpose of what follows.
 - The chant is to be restored to the people’s use for the purpose of what follows
 - The subject is “Christicolae” (the faithful of Christ) and the predicate “participes sint” (they may be participants)
 - There is a very interesting use of the comparative adjective as an adverb, indicating this participation should be “vehementius” (more vehement).

- And not just a claim that this was previously done, but the use of the “mos majorum” (the ancient Roman unwritten code of social norms)
 - Put simply, St. Pius X is making in the Latin an even stronger claim : that the ancient Christian norms, had the people singing the Gregorian Chant, such as the Ordinary of the Mass, and the common parts Divine Office
 - And the Latin shows that St. Pius X was demanding that the faithful learn to sing and be not just “active participants” but to participate in exactly the kind of way that “partecipazione attiva” suggests —“with vehemence”.
- So, at the very least, Pope St. Pius X intends to restore the congregational singing of the faithful for the common parts of the Mass, and intends an all-male schola for the propers, when this cannot be sung by all due to their complexity.
- This is a good example of the kind of participation St. Pius X wished, and other similar forms such as recited responses at a dialog Mass when singing was impossible, fit that mold.
- We also know that St. Pius X intended this kind of participation because of his personal correspondence on these matters, frequently praising clergy and choirmasters who did so.
- **Unfortunately, this was widely resisted, especially in the United States**
 - Cardinal Gibbons objected that there were no abuses in the United State to fix
 - The Vicar-General of the Diocese of Kansas City was famously quoted saying that the part about forbidding women from the choir would simply be ignored in the United States, and was not an abuse.
 - The *Los Angeles Times* put it this way, summarizing the response of prelates they surveyed,

[Slide of LA Times Article (Two slides, follow the reading)]

“A peremptory order to confine the singing in Roman Catholic churches in this country to male voices and the Gregorian chants would be apt to result in at least a temporary cessation of church music altogether...”

“That women should keep silence in the churches is a precept as old as St. Paul. But it has been long and so extensively dishonored in the organ lofts that to banish from them the sex which is at once the more musical and the more devout would be to reduce many of those eyries to the condition of ‘bare ruined choirs.’”

- Returning to my earlier point, we see that the Sainly Pope Pius X (our patron) was widely disobeyed
- As such, simply relying on the kind of “participation” done by people in the 19th and 20th centuries (or even earlier) as what should be done seems to go against what St. Pius X wished for.
- And, it may have been in part due to this widespread resistance, that the Liturgical Movement made this “active participation” such a primary point in their work
- It certainly was the failure of people to obey St. Pius X that led to the them being developed and mentioned again by his successors.
- **The theme is developed by Pius XI**
 - Pius XI issued the encyclical letter *Divini Cultus* in 1928 celebrating the 25th anniversary of St. Pius X’s *Tra le sollicitudini*:

[Three Slides Pius XI’s Divini Cultus (follow the reading)]

- *“The faithful come to church in order to derive piety from its chief source, by taking an active part in the venerated mysteries and the public solemn prayers of the Church.”*
- *“In order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, let them be made once more to sing the Gregorian Chant, so far as it belongs to them to take part in it. It is most important that when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, or when pious sodalities take part with the clergy in a procession, they should not be merely detached and silent spectators, but, filled with a deep sense of the beauty of the Liturgy, they should sing alternately with the clergy or the choir, as it is prescribed. If this is done, then it will no*

longer happen that the people either make no answer at all to the public prayers — whether in the language of the Liturgy or in the vernacular — or at best utter the responses in a low and subdued manner.”

- Pius XI also addresses, gently, but firmly those who would not follow the Motu Proprio of St. Pius X, or his directives, by labelling them “laws of the Church” and calling out the “easy excuses” people are using to exempt themselves.
- **Pius XII echoes all of these sentiments, but also tries to ensure that this participation is understood correctly**
 - Pius XII clearly knew that there were problems brewing in the Liturgical Movement
 - In his encyclical *Mediator Dei* he condemns a false antiquarianism (merely trying to restore what used to be done without understanding why it changed)
 - He tried to remove an activist spirit and merely external participation as the goal of the call for “active participation.”
 - He emphasizes that the principle and necessary participation is interior worship.
 - He provides practical ways that the faithful may “take part more easily and fruitfully in the Mass.”
 - He specifically recommends Sunday and Feast Day Vespers for the faithful.
 - He insists on the necessity of congregational singing.
 - He directs that the Church and in particular the Holy See regulates the liturgy
 - This is a good principle, but will be hijacked once weak or sympathetic Popes allow deviations (as did Paul VI).
 - Under Pius XII the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued one of the most thorough and practical decrees in its Instruction on Sacred Music in the feast of St. Pius X, 1958.
 - It can be seen how this is the culmination and synthesis of all that came before, without any undue influence of the false spirit that would undergird the Novus Ordo in a short 12 years.

HOW TO ENGAGE IN PARTICIPATIO ACTUOSA

- **In *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII suggests many legitimate ways of a real participation in the liturgy:**
 - The use of a hand missal (or books of the offices) to be able to follow the prayers of the priest and clergy during the liturgy,
 - That the faithful recite the responses the servers would make during a recited (Low) Mass,
 - Singing of hymns appropriate to the parts of the Mass (during a Low or Sung Mass),
 - The singing by the faithful of the Kyrie and Responses at a Sung or Solemn Mass.
- **Pius XII also recognizes that not all can do these things, and yet can still participate in the liturgy according to their state:**
 - Not all can read or purchase a hand missal,
 - Not all are intelligent enough to understand all of the depth of the liturgy,
 - So the Pope suggests that meditation on the mysteries of Christ, or the performance of some other private devotions which are in harmony with the Mass, when the faithful are unable to follow a missal, understand the Mass, or make responses.
 - So, saying the Rosary during Mass may be a good way of participating for some, but not out of habit, when those same people can reasonably sing, make responses, or follow the prayers.
 - Nevertheless, it is clear that the Popes saw this as a legitimate, but certainly lesser way to participate, provided that there is some kind of link between the Rosary being said and the liturgy
- **Don't be *that guy***

- It is for the pastor to explain how the Church and Popes want the faithful to participate
 - Thus, no one, even well-meaning, should presume to correct other faithful either for the way they participate or their seeming lack of participation.
 - It also is not for the faithful to, on the reasonable instruction of the pastor, pridefully assert they will do whatever they choose, or that they know better than the pastor
 - If they feel they need to discuss the matter with the pastor, they should do so privately and with deference.
 - Avoid all long-form letters and critiques (as if the pastor lacked the resources)
- Don't just do your own thing, even if you are "right".
 - The worst possible way to participate in the liturgy is to make yourself a spectacle.

THE FALSITY OF "SILENCE"

- **Real reverent silence in the Latin Church is the balance seen in the Solemn Mass, not in the Low Mass**
- **Hyperbolic objections abound to insist**
 - *"Pius XI attempted to rid the church of the traditional way of silent participation"*
 - *"Congregational singing and dialog promoted in Divini Cultus came neither from Pius X, nor from the conservative clergy, nor from the faithful, [but] the liturgical saboteurs"*
- We have the testimony of the Popes, but let's look instead at one of the lesser-known Fathers of the Church St. Niceta of Remesiana (4th cent.) in his *De utilitate hymnorum* (in English "On Liturgical Singing"):
- **[Slides of St. Niceta, follow along with the reading]**

I know of some, not only in our region but in the East, who consider the singing of psalms and hymns to be an excess that is barely appropriate to divine religion; they consider it enough if a psalm is spoken in the heart, and frivolous if uttered aloud by the mouth...

Nevertheless, if truth be told, just as I do not censure those who "sing in the heart" (for it is always beneficial to meditate upon the things of God), so too do I commend those who honor God with the sound of the voice.

He then takes aim at those who say that one should not sing aloud because St. Paul indicates one should "make melody to the Lord in your hearts" (Eph 5:19).

The objection to singing is the invention of heretics. When their faith grows cold, they think up reasons for rejecting song. They cloak their hatred of the Prophets and, particularly, of the prophecies concerning the Lord and Creator. Under the pretext of piety, they silence the words of the Prophets and, above all, the heavenly songs of David.

He then takes aim at those who say that one should not sing aloud because St. Paul indicates one should "make melody to the Lord in your hearts" (Eph 5:19).

When we sing, all should sing; when we pray, all should pray. So, when the lesson is being read, all should remain silent, that all may equally hear. No one should be praying with so loud a voice as to disturb the one who is reading. And if you should happen to come in while the lesson is being read, simply adore the Lord, make the Sign of the Cross, and then give an attentive ear to what is being read.

Obviously, the time to pray is when we are all praying. Of course, you may pray privately whenever and as often as you choose. But do not, under the pretext of prayer, miss the lesson. You can always pray whenever you will, but you cannot always have a lesson at hand. Do not imagine there is little to be gained by listening to the sacred lesson...

He then mentions the deacon who in the earlier rites would sing to instruct the faithful and warn them what to do, such as to pray, or to be attentive — the famous "The Doors! The Doors! In Wisdom, be attentive!"

We need not wonder, then, if the deacon in a clear voice like a herald warns all that, whether they are praying or bowing the knees, singing hymns, or listening to the lesson, they should all act together. God loves “men of one manner” (Cf. Lk. 10:42) and, as was said before, “maketh them to dwell in His house” (Ps. 67:7). And those who dwell in this house are proclaimed by the psalm to be blessed, because they will praise God forever and ever.

And he provides some very practical advice:

If one cannot sing in tune with the others, it is better to sing in a low voice rather than drown out the others. In this way he will take part in the service without interfering with the community singing.

WHAT ABOUT WHEN IT IS NOT A SUNG MASS? (THE DIALOG MASS)

- **First Preliminary: this question is one of praxis, not doctrine.**
 - Not doctrinal
 - There is no doctrine which requires only the clergy to sing or recite the responses
 - Since the servers at Mass already make most of the responses that would be made at a Dialog Mass, there is nothing inherently wrong with others making this.
 - The Church even recommends that should a priest not have a server or a man to make responses for him, if necessary, a woman from outside the rail, could make the responses.
 - Question of praxis and prudence
 - When something is not forbidden or necessitated by doctrine or law, it becomes a matter of prudence.
 - Here we weigh the benefits and downsides, avoiding causing any disturbance (digne, attente, ac devote)
- **Second Preliminary: Avoid *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacies**
 - The forced activity and responses in the Novus Ordo may have a ***material similarity*** to the Dialog Mass
 - Critics often associate the two, as if the Dialog Mass was intended to produce the Novus Ordo,
 - If that were the case, though why in places it was not common was the Novus Ordo able to have success?
 - For example, in England and the United States, the Dialog Mass was less common, whereas in France it was very common. Yet, the Novus Ordo succeeded just as much in both places.
- **Third Preliminary: Lest anyone think I’m advocating for the Dialog Mass in the parochial situation, I am not**
 - Again, it is a matter of praxis, and practically in a parish setup it rarely results in a dignified, reverent liturgy.
 - Where it does tend to work well is in schools and small groups (e.g. a boys’ camp or scouting trip)
 - By reciting what they would sing (Kyriale, Responses), the prayers at the foot, and the Confiteor, the children learn the Mass and how to follow it.
 - It occupies children in a devout practice, instead of leaving them to daydream or misbehave
 - In smaller groups of boys where all serve the Mass anyways, this helps them to follow the Mass, make the same responses they would make if serving as an Acolyte, and practically help them to practice and improve their serving and responses.
 - Note that these are practical considerations, so ones of prudence.
 - These also seem to be the situations where in the United States the Dialog Mass found support based on surveys in the early 20th century.

- My own personal take is that the Dialog Mass (when a Sung Mass is practically impossible), works in limited situations, and these tend to be situations where without some engagement and active participation, those attending are more likely to not attend with attention, in a dignified manner, and will tend to lack devotion.
 - This is my own personal impressions, and I would not institute this where it did not already exist, nor end it where it exists (SSPX policy)
 - I am merely making observations
 - My real objection in the debate on the Dialog Mass is to the two sides arguing past each other.
 - The pro-Dialog Mass tends to make academic arguments which often are not practical or pastorally-minded. They appeal to antiquity for the laity making sung responses, then apply without appreciating the practical problems when responses are not sung.
 - Example of trained servers kneeling next to each other
 - Now, 500 people in an echoey church who aren't trained?!
 - The anti-Dialog Mass sees this, tends to make non-academic, often emotional arguments with sweeping claims associating any liturgical changes with the Novus Ordo, and then while critiquing the appeal to antiquity for singing, appeals to the last 1000 years as "silent" so is guilty of the same kind of antiquarianism they critique.
- **Fourth Preliminary: For 1000 years, Low Mass has been in silence is a bad argument**
 - As before, simply because we can appeal to a practice that is immemorial and commonplace, doesn't mean it necessarily follows the correct Catholic spirit.
 - And is that even true? While critics of the Dialog Mass make this claim that the Low Mass was always in silence, various texts from the 13th through 17th century suggest there were some responses made by the faithful even at a recited Mass in certain places.
 - If one appeals to the last 1000 years, he can't then critique someone who then appeals to what happened before. Both are a form of antiquarianism.
- **Addressing the Elephant in the Room**
 - **There is nothing doctrinally wrong about the Dialog Mass**
 - **It is a question of whether it is practically and pastorally suitable**
 - **On account of the strong opinions about it, and because it is a relatively new practice, it seems better not to disturb people about it**
 - Already the problem of the faithful singing and their participation at a Sung Mass needs attention.
 - The Pope have been very clear on this, without need of extrapolation from these principles to suggest a recited Mass
 - The focus seems best put not on training people to recited the responses in a dignified manner in a parochial situation, but instead
 - To learn to sing the Kyriale and Responses at Mass as St. Pius X desired,
 - To develop a good-quality men's schola cantorum for the Gregorian Chant
 - To develop other good quality musicians (organists, choirs, etc.)
 - To teach about the Divine Office and encourage faithful to participate especially in Sunday and Feast Day Vespers, and possibly in some places in Compline.
 - These seem higher priorities, and instead, the use of the Dialog Mass seems to be better suited to those smaller groups mentioned (schools, camps, servers, etc.)
 - Where, however, it is already done well, provided the Dialog Mass is not preferred to a Solemn or Sung Mass, there seems no reason to discontinue it.