

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS

Fr. Andrew Bergkamp

**July 20/21, 2019**

This week I would like to provide a brief description of what one is expected to wear at the Latin Mass and explain why this is the custom. I hope to connect this to the Novus Ordo Mass, where the customs appear different, and whether or not this is good.

## **Reverence is key**

- One of the main reasons people are attracted to the Latin Mass is the noticeable degree of reverence. As humans, we have an innate awareness that God deserves our respect and worship to Him ought to have the characteristic of reverence. This has gone by the wayside over the years, but the Latin Mass maintains it, and thus it is refreshing to those who experience the old form of the Mass.

## **What to wear?**

- In light of the reverence owed to God, the custom has been to dress modestly and in a dignified manner. If Holy Mass is the most important thing we attend each week, our attire should mirror this reality. For this reason, it is customary for men to wear a coat and tie (with AC available these days it's not unreasonable). Besides showing respect to God, Whose presence we are in at Holy Mass, proper attire also speaks to our own human dignity that God has bestowed and redeemed for us.
- For women, it is customary to wear a skirt or dress; and going back to the time of Christ and the Early Church, a chapel veil is often worn on a woman's head. This is also in imitation of our Blessed Mother, expressing the woman's modesty and beautiful femininity.
  - Women represent the beauty of creation and the Church as Bride, they also glorify their husbands; but, at Holy Mass everything gives deference to God Himself and to highlight His beauty and glory, we "veil" the people or things that receive their beauty and glory from Him.
  - Not every woman wears a veil to the Latin Mass, but it is a praiseworthy tradition that should not be disregarded.
- In summary, one's "Sunday Best" is still (usually) maintained by those who attend the Latin Mass. Most priests wear a more stunning chasuble on Sundays than on weekdays, not to mention the chasuble is only for Holy Mass, and not for other ministry. Hence, the parallel of the laity wearing their most dignified clothing which is reserved for Sunday Mass.

## **Room for improvement**

- It's hard to disagree with the observation that dress attire at the Novus Ordo is casual, to say the least. Some people dress up, but most dress as though they're ready for work, the ball game, or even the drive-through at Spangles. We can do better than this, and God certainly deserves it. Our entire being is involved in the worship of God, and our physical appearance helps set the tone for our interior/spiritual participation. So besides revering God, you may improve your personal experience of Holy Mass by preparing yourself in the way you dress.