



The Sacred Liturgy is absolutely the first act of the New Evangelization. Unless we worship God in spirit and in truth, unless we celebrate the Sacred Liturgy with the greatest possible

faith in God and faith in the divine action which takes place in Holy Mass, we are not going to have the inspiration and the grace to carry out the New Evangelization. . . .

If the Sacred Liturgy is celebrated in an anthropocentric way, in a horizontal way in which it is no longer evident that it is a divine action, it simply becomes a social activity that can be relativized along with everything else — it doesn't have any lasting impact on one's life. I think the celebration of the Extraordinary Form can have a very significant part to play in the New Evangelization because of its emphasis on the transcendence of the Sacred Liturgy. In other words, it emphasizes the reality of the union of Heaven and earth through the Sacred Liturgy.

**✠ Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke,  
Patron of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta**

In the post-conciliar period a collapse of the life of faith and of ecclesiastical discipline has taken place, seen especially in the liturgical crisis. The liturgy has become an anthropocentric activity. It has ended up by being a reflection of the idea of man instead of the right of God to be adored as He himself asks. From here, in the moral sphere attention is focused almost exclusively on the needs and wants of men, instead of on what the Creator has written in the hearts of his creatures. The *lex orandi* is always bound to the *lex credendi*. If someone does not pray well, then he does not believe well and therefore he does not

behave well. When I go to celebrate the Traditional Mass, for example, I see so many beautiful young families with so many children. I do not believe that these families do not have problems, but it is evident that they have more strength to confront them. This has to say something. The liturgy is the most perfect and most complete expression of our life in Christ, and when all of this is lessened or is betrayed every aspect of the life of the faithful is harmed.

**✠ Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke**



People have misconceptions about evangelization as if it is something we ourselves, with human effort, can achieve. This is a basic misunderstanding. What the Lord wanted us to do was to join him and His mission. The mission is *His* mission. If we think

we are the ones to be finding grandiose plans to achieve that, we are on the wrong track. The missionary life of the Church is the realization of our union with Him, and this union is achieved in the most tangible way through the liturgy. Therefore, the more the Church is united with the Lord in the celebration of the liturgy, the more fruitful the mission of the Church will become. That is why this is very important.

The re-introduction of the *usus antiquior*—the older form of the Roman liturgy—by Pope Benedict XVI was thus not a retrograde step as some called it, but a move to bring back to the sacred liturgy a deeper sense of awe and mysticism and a way in which the Pope sought to prevent a blatant banalization of something so pivotal to the life of the Church. This initiative should be given due value and support.

**✠ Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith,  
Archbishop of Colombo**

I am solidly convinced that an authentic and faithful renewal and reform of the sacred liturgy is not only part of the New Evangelization, it is essential to its fruitfulness. The liturgy has the power to form and transform



the Catholic faithful. We must live by the axiom *lex orandi, lex credendi*: the law of praying is the law of believing. What we celebrate in the Mass expresses the essential content of the faith, and it also reinforces our faith when celebrated well and with fidelity. The liturgy both teaches us and expresses what we believe. If we do not get the sacred liturgy right, I fear that we will just be spinning our wheels rather than getting the New Evangelization going in the right direction. If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.

**✠ Alexander K. Sample,  
Archbishop of Portland**



As a bishop it is my duty to do all I can to promote the New Evangelization initiated by John Paul II. I wish to say very clearly that the New Evangelization must be founded on the faithful and fruitful celebration of the sacred liturgy as given to us

by the Church in her tradition—Western and Eastern. Why? Because it is in the sacred liturgy that we encounter the saving action of Jesus Christ in His Church today in a manner in which we encounter it nowhere else. In the liturgy

Christ touches us, nourishes us, and heals us. He strengthens us and orders us with particular graces. ...

The New Evangelization is not an idea or a program: it is a demand that each of us comes to know the person of Christ more profoundly and, by doing so, become more able to lead others to Him. The only way to begin to do this is through the sacred liturgy, and if the liturgy is somehow not as it should be, or I am not properly prepared, this encounter with Christ will be impeded, the New Evangelization will suffer. ...

The history of evangelization throughout the centuries shows how the great missionaries were great men of prayer, and more specifically of authentic devotion. It also shows the correlation between the quality and depth of liturgical life and apostolic dynamism. ...

The New Evangelization needs to anchor itself in profound Eucharistic and liturgical renewal by rediscovering the sources of liturgical Tradition and the diversity of its expressions in the Church's heritage—especially through the mutual enrichment between the older and newer forms of the Roman rite...

✠ **Dominique Rey,**  
**Bishop of Fréjus-Toulon**

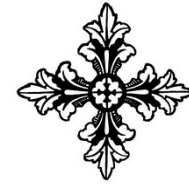
Only on the basis of adoring and glorifying God can the Church adequately proclaim the word of truth, that is, evangelize. Before the world ever heard Jesus, the eternal Word made flesh, preach and proclaim the Kingdom, He quietly adored for thirty years. This remains forever the law for the Church's life and action as well as for all evangelizers.



“The way the liturgy is treated decides the fate of the Faith and of the Church,” said Cardinal Ratzinger. ... The Second Vatican Council intended to remind the Church what reality and what action were to take the first place in her life. This is the reason for which the first of the Council's documents was dedicated to the liturgy. The Council gives us the following principles: in the Church, and therefore in the liturgy, the human must be oriented towards the divine and be subordinate to it; likewise the visible in relation to the invisible, action in relation to contemplation, the present in relation to the future city to which we aspire (see *Sacr. Conc.* 2). According to the teaching of Vatican II our earthly liturgy participates in a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy of the holy city of Jerusalem. Everything about the liturgy of the Holy Mass must therefore serve to express clearly the reality of Christ's sacrifice, namely the prayers of adoration, of thanks, of expiation, and of impetration that the eternal High Priest presented to His Father. ...

Before we can expect efficacious and lasting fruits from the new evangelization, a process of conversion must get under way within the Church. How can we call others to convert while, among those doing the calling, no convincing conversion towards God has yet occurred, internally or externally? ... No one can evangelize unless he has first adored, or better yet unless he adores constantly and gives God, Christ the Eucharist, true priority in his way of celebrating and in all of his life.

✠ **Athanasius Schneider**  
**Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Mary of Astana, Kazakhstan**



## CARDINALS AND BISHOPS SPEAK

about

# The Sacred Liturgy and the New Evangelization

