

Msgr. R. Michael Schmitz's Sermon on the Motu Proprio "*Summorum Pontificum*"

Dear Faithful!

The Church is always young. She renews herself daily through God's Grace. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a continuous source of new life, renewed strength, and ever greater youth for Holy Mother Church and all her children. Therefore, we begin the Mass with the words: "*Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat iuventutem meam,*" I enter to the altar of God, to God who rejoices my youth!

God renews the youth of His Church. This has just happened again. The Holy Father has published on his own initiative the Apostolic Letter *Summorum Pontificum* and granted that from now on every priest has access to the eternally young Roman Rite, the Rite of the Holy Roman Church through her long life, the Rite of her youth that continues in heaven.

By granting this universal permission for the use of the classical liturgy, the Holy Father indeed shows his truly pastoral care. The Church is timeless. She is open to the beauty of all times, which is not limited to the select few but accessible to all. God does not change nor do His Mysteries celebrated on the altars of our churches. Eternity does not know fashion, but is eternally fashionable. The Saints, the Angels, the Blessed Mother, and certainly God Almighty does not age, nor does His Church or Her rites. The *Motu Proprio* makes this very clear to us. The Classical Roman Rite is the source of all liturgies of the Latin Church. Now this source is open to all! The Holy Father writes: "As from time immemorial so in the future the principle shall be respected "according to which each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also as to the usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition. These are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also so that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church's rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*)."

The liturgical richness of the Church comes from the Lord who is God. His grace has brought forth innumerable sacramental fruits. The many Rites in the Church -- the Byzantine, the Chaldean, the Armenian, the Maronite and many others -- have always coexisted with the Latin Rite. This diversity is an expression of spiritual wealth. The *Motu Proprio* makes it clear that the Latin Rite in all its beauty belongs to the liturgical treasure of the Universal Church who will not forsake what has been given to her by the Lord Himself. The Holy Father states in his explanatory letter to the *Motu Proprio*: "What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place." Therefore, the Holy Father grants in the most generous way the use of the Liturgy in force in 1962, not only for the celebration of the Mass, but also for all sacraments and devotions and he hopes that the presence, the beauty, and dignity of the classical liturgy may contribute to any liturgical celebration in the church.

"*Bonum est diffusivum sui*": The good has its own dynamic; it has the tendency to spread. In the last few years the Church has seen an incredible growth of love and appreciation for her timeless Rite. Especially young families, young men and women, teens and children have discovered the liturgical treasures of Holy Mother Church in the Classical Roman Rite. With many others, they have desired fervently a direct access to what they see as their own heritage. Worldwide the request for freedom for the eternally young Roman Rite has been roused. And it is true: What belongs to all should be given to all. That is what has now happened through the the Apostolic Letter "*Summorum Pontificum*." and the Holy Father recognizes this dynamic in his letter to the Bishops that accompanies the *Motu Proprio*: "in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them."

The Catholic Liturgy has never been reserved to an elite alone. The freedom of her graces is for all. The Holy Father has given this freedom back to a Church full of youth. The Holy Father also underlines the authority of the diocesan bishop in questions of the liturgy. We feel very blessed that where the Institute of Christ the King serves, there has already been a profound pastoral understanding anticipating the decision of the Holy Father on the part of our bishops. The *Motu Proprio* "*Summorum Pontificum*" therefore, strengthens us in our love and veneration for our beloved Holy Father and our superiors. Thank you, Holy Father!

Amen.