

Ordination au Nigéria

Author : Summorum Pontificum

Categories : [Communiqué](#), [Summorum Pontificum](#)

Date : 5 octobre 2017



Nous avons relayé l'annonce puis les photos de l'ordination de l'abbé Charles Ike. [Notre confrère Rorate Caeli](#) a relevé que les New York Times dans son édition de dimanche 1er

octobre a consacré un article complet au regain de la forme extraordinaire (y compris en Afrique) et à cette ordination en particulier.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2017

Why Nigerian Catholics Love Latin Mass

UMUAKA, NIGERIA
IN August, under a bright blue sky and in front of 2,000 worshippers, Bishop Gregory Ochiagha performed the first traditional Latin ordination in Nigeria since the vernacular liturgy was introduced after Vatican II in the 1960s. Near the end of the Mass, the 60-year-old bishop nearly fainted. "I am so happy, I am so happy," he whispered as he was led to a chair.

Catholics attached to the Latin Mass have suffered a great deal since the introduction of the vernacular liturgy after Vatican II. But 50 years ago, they enjoyed a sublime vindication. Pope Benedict XVI declared in his document "Summorum Pontificum" that all Catholics have the right to the traditional liturgy. "What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too," Benedict wrote. Bishop Ochiagha generously distributed copies of "Summorum" to his brother bishops in Nigeria, many of whom had criticized his support for the Latin Mass.

Though traditionalists remain a tiny minority in Nigeria, as throughout the world, their number is growing. Catholic traditionalists see the ancient language of the Latin Mass as a sign of their faith's stability and unity, an indication that Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. They would like to see it return worldwide, but for now, some of its strongest adherents have been in places like Nigeria, where historical tumult and eth-

An older service links faraway lands to Rome, and Catholic traditions.

nic strife have given traditionalists special reason to value this aspect of their faith. Six years ago, Bishop Ochiagha buried his friend Emeka Ojukwu, who had led the Biafran Republic in its rebellion against the Nigerian state. Bishop Ochiagha served Biafra as a diplomat and watched the rape and pillage that accompanied its defeat in 1970.

At that fraught moment, foreign priests were expelled from Nigeria by the government, and the vernacular liturgy was introduced by the Vatican. "The time of the liturgical change was not easy," Bishop Ochiagha told me. "People thought the church was collapsing." In one stroke, Catholics were cut off from their past. They also found it harder to pray. "The traditional Mass encourages reflection and prayer," he said. "The new Mass gives itself to jamboree."

So when one of Bishop Ochiagha's priests asked permission in the 1990s to celebrate the Latin Mass again in Nigeria, the bishop agreed. The priest, the Rev. Evaristus Eshiwu, had studied in Los Angeles, where he was shocked by what he saw as the irreverence of American worship. He felt called by the Virgin Mary to revive a liturgy in which her son would be rightly honored. Returning to Nigeria, he began monthly recitations of 2,000 Rosaries, marathon prayer sessions that stretched from 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. and ended with the Latin Mass.

Traditional Catholicism is sometimes considered superstitious for the stress it places on formal devotions like the Rosary and meatless Fridays, but history shows that such practices are what have made the faith appealing to all nations and classes. When bishops began to discard traditional devotions at the time of Vatican II, the British anthropologist Mary Douglas accused them of turning the faith into an airy set of bourgeois ethical commitments. Liturgical change was a kind of class war. Available statistics bear her argument out: In the United States, Mass attendance remained stable among Catholics when the Latin Mass was abandoned, but fell among the poor.

It is amazing that the leaders of a ritual faith imagined they could dispense with traditional forms of praying — the few elites who saw the folly of this project, were artists, naturally alert to the way supposedly ideal things can in fact be essential. In a 1971 letter to Paul VI, artists of all faiths and no faith — figuratively as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Graham Greene and Atha Christie — protested that the Latin Mass is a living work of art, belonging "to universal culture as to churchmen."

John Waugh, a Catholic, realized that these exteriors were connected with essential matters. "When the aesthetic changes which rob the church of its mystery and dignity," he wrote, "there are profound changes in faith and morals which alarm the faithful."

In his 2000 apostolic letter "Summorum Pontificum," Benedict noted that the traditional liturgy introduced the barbarian elements of Europe not only to the Catholic faith but also to the world. "The treasures of worship and culture amassed by the Church over the centuries have a kind of 'romanitas' that complements

traditional cultures of all kinds.

This idea appeals to Edwin Mary Akaedu, a parishioner in this southeastern Nigerian town. He cites the parallels between the Latin Mass and the traditions of his Igbo tribe and views claims that the vernacular Mass can be more easily "inculturated" as misleading. "The idea of inculturation was not native," he told me. "It was introduced. Like every Western fashion, it was quickly taken up by everyone."

Mr. Akaedu said that at less traditional parishes he did not receive clear moral direction. "But here I was told: This is the right way to live, this is what God wants."

Perpetua Iwuala, 16, told me the same thing: "The priests here tell you everything you need to know. They teach you the Commandments. At other parishes they don't."

AMONG the worshippers going up for communion in bright home-sewn garments printed with images of Mary and the saints, one boy stands out. He wears a gray T-shirt that reads, "Clan McLean Reunion, Fredericksburg, Va., 1997." It is probably a cast-off, discarded by others but taken up here — just like the Latin Mass. When the liturgy is ended, children run around the churchyard crying out to each other: "Sixtus! Perpetua! Felicitas!" It could be a roll call of old Roman worthies. When a priest from a neighboring parish criticizes the traditional liturgy, a girl ex-

claims, "Father is a modernist!"

Catholics elsewhere have largely dispensed with the condemnations of modernism, along with the Latin Mass. There is something biblical in the way these things found new life in Nigeria. Just as Jacob displaced one nation outpaces another in devotion, the work, one must have the humility to accept it. Christianity is a hand-me-down affair, the marks of those who came before.

Shortly after his conversion to Catholicism, John Waugh wrote a story about a visitor to a remote village cast 500 years into the future, when the village had moved to a cluster of huts. The English inhabitants were savages who cower as colonizers from Africa and down the Thames. The traveler is disappointed when his eyes fall on something he knows. "Of course, there had come into being something new, a new shape in chaos." An African priest is saying the same thing about the Latin Mass.

Despite centuries of reversal and tumult, the "new and yet ageless" remained. When the Latin Mass was suppressed at the end of Waugh's life, the vision of it being said forever seemed more likely today, it is due in part to Bishop Ochiagha and the worshippers who have preserved an inheritance rejected by others. In the end, the body of Christ remains "a sacrament marked but unbroken by the passing of time."



PHIL UTOBI EKPE/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY

[Autres photos de l'ordination](#)