

## **Feast of Christ the King. October 25, 2009, Walton & Lexington, KY**

**Introduction:** Today's Feast has always been very nostalgic for me. Whenever this Feast comes around, I can't help but recall how we used to celebrate this Feast the four years that I was in our college Seminary near Detroit, MI. Besides celebrating the Feast on the last Sunday of October, we also had our annual celebration of Forty Hours Devotion that week-end, beginning on the previous Friday.

**1. The Forty Hours celebration:** We would begin the opening of the Forty Hours devotion with a Solemn High Mass in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. This Mass would be celebrated *coram Sanctissimo*, which meant with the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the Monstrance all during the Mass. Needless to say those involved in the Mass were expected to make many, many genuflections. Unfortunately in my opinion, this manner of celebrating Mass was abrogated in the 1962 reforms. Maybe Pope Benedict or some future Pope will see fit to restore it.

**2. The second day** of the Forty Hours was celebrated with a Solemn Votive Mass for Peace, actually celebrated at one of the side altars in the Chapel, since the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the Monstrance on the High Altar.

**3. The third day** had another Solemn High Mass *coram Sanctissimo* in honor of Christ the King at the main or High altar. Then in the afternoon we had solemn Vespers for Christ the King. It is hard to find words to describe the beauty of these ceremonies. I had an aunt who lived in Detroit who would come to visit me in the seminary, and she often said that "attending Mass in that chapel was as close to heaven as one could ever get on this earth."

**4. The why of this celebration:** Perhaps some might ask why we would want to have such elaborate celebrations? There is nothing that comes anyway near it in our present Liturgical circumstances. I do believe that the main focus simply was our Lord in His role as Christ our King. We were doing everything humanly possible to honor our King. I like to think that our prayer and participation in these Masses and Divine Office was completely God-centered.

**5. Not appreciative:** Recently I read an article that stated that perhaps we were deprived of our Traditional Latin Mass for so many years to help us regain appreciation for it. I can't deny that in the past there were some less than commendable celebrations of the Traditional Mass. When I think of all those parishes where they sang only the Mass of the Angels for High Masses, regardless of the Feast or type of celebration. I've heard of some people who thought that was the only Mass that was supposed to be used. I have to humbly admit that being deprived of the Traditional Mass for about eighteen years certainly gave me a greater appreciation of it. I might add that I find both forms of the Traditional Mass very beautiful and inspiring, both the Low Mass and the Sung Mass.

**6. To be commended:** I can also say that the way that the Traditional Mass is celebrated, especially in its sung or High Mass at Walton and Lexington is something we can be proud of. Maybe the talent at our disposal isn't as extensive as we would like it to be. But you certainly do the best you can. I'm including choir, servers and congregation in this.

**7. Difference between Traditional & New Mass:** When I am asked "What is the main difference between the Traditional Mass and the New Mass, I don't hesitate to say: "The Traditional Mass is God-centered; the new Mass is too man or people centered." I'm not questioning any validity. I'm just stating what I think are facts. I would like to think that today's celebration will give us the opportunity to refocus our attention as to why we come to Mass. It is primarily to Honor God. I know that some people probably need the prodding of being obligated which causes them to come. Now is the time to attempt to improve on that.

**Conclusion** We are not here to beg for what we need; we are not even here so much to ask forgiveness for our sins. We are honoring our King today. I might add that even our imperfect rendition of the proper Vespers for today has the same focus. I did practice some with the children and a few adults on Friday. This is a special gift that we are offering to Christ our King today. Those who fail to see the beauty and inspiration, the God-centeredness, of our traditional liturgy are missing out on a lot. Thank God that you have the opportunity to take part.