

PAIX LITURGIQUE

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IN MEXICO 300 DIOCESAN SEMINARIANS EXPERIENCE THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS.

WHY NOT IN EUROPE?

Guadalajara is the see of one of the principal Mexican archdioceses. It is solidly anchored in the Catholic tradition and still numbers over 2000 priests. Add to that the largest major seminary in the world, which was founded in 1696 and numbers over 600 seminarians. This means that this seminary alone has one half as many as all the seminaries in Spain and nearly as many as all French diocesan seminaries combined. . . .

On 2 June 2014, for the first time since the liturgical reform, a priest went up to the altar of the Lord in the Saint Joseph of Guadalajara Seminary chapel, there to celebrate Mass according to the missal of John XXIII. It was celebrated by Father Jonathan Romanoski, one of the Fraternity of Saint Peter priests stationed in Guadalajara, in the presence of close to 300 of the Seminary students. Mind you, the diocese of Guadalajara had already made room for the traditional liturgy even before the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*, and so the two liturgical forms have been cohabitating without a snag.

Father Romanoski, who is originally from Pennsylvania and was ordained by Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos in 2008, had already conducted introductory extraordinary form workshops at the seminary. These workshops only went so far, however, while the June 2 Mass gathered close to half the seminarians and was—very officially—sung by the seminary schola.

Father Romanoski was able to give a brief outline of the principal characteristics of the extraordinary form of the rite just before celebrating this Mass, which had been organized at the seminarians' request. It's a safe bet that this June 2, 2014 Mass will be a milestone since it allowed many future priests, in a very official and very "normal" setting—their seminary—to discover the beauty and richness of the traditional liturgy.

In his account of the event, Spanish columnist Fernández de La Cigoña, who runs a well-known Spanish-language blog, noted that the Mass celebrated in Guadalajara was the Mass of the Cristeros: "They knew no other Mass. From it they received the grace to be Catholics. But not just Catholics like us. They were heroes, martyrs, saints."

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(Photo Una Voce Mexico)

THE REFLECTIONS OF PAIX LITURGIQUE

1) Deo gratias! Even though the fruits of the Mass said on June 2 have yet to arrive, this Mass is obviously itself a wonderful fruit of Benedict XVI's *motu proprio*. Who, in the days before Benedict XVI's gesture of reconciliation, back when there was so much opposition on the part of bishops, could have imagined that a few years later the doors of one of the largest seminaries in the world would be opened wide to the traditional liturgy?

2) "The experiment of Tradition": it took a while for Rome to hear Archbishop Lefebvre's call, but since 2007 that is in fact what whole sections of the Church have the possibility, if not the freedom, to perform. In any event that is certainly what the future priests of the diocese of Guadalajara experienced on June 2, 2014. The seminarians made a request, the seminary administration responded favorably, and a qualified priest provided. This is the state of normalcy we are aspiring to, the normalcy about which Cardinal Cañizares, Prefect for Divine Worship, speaks regularly.

3) So far in Europe, hardly a single seminary has attempted to perform the experiment of tradition, even as vocation figures have fallen dramatically in forty years. Yet there are those bishops who would love to have at their disposal "*Summorum Pontificum*" priests, who are able to celebrate either liturgical form—but they seem incapable of giving their own seminarians a formation in the two liturgical forms of the Roman rite. This episcopal tepidity is often explained by the

opposition of the seminary faculties and of a part of the diocesan clergy who refuse what they consider to be “traditionalization” of the diocese. We’ll wager that as long as this ideological refusal against any openness to the tradition exists in seminaries—unlike what is happening in many seminaries of the Americas, as the Guadalajara Mass illustrates—their enrollment statistics will have trouble turning around, as will, therefore, their priestly ordinations.

4) Your Excellencies, Bishops of Europe, is it not time to open the doors of your seminaries to reality and to make room for those new candidates to the priesthood who wish to exercise BOTH an extraordinary and an ordinary ministry, in order to implement the mutual enrichment Benedict XVI desired? Such an openness would have the added benefit of fostering the unity of the clergy through a better knowledge of each side’s particularities and thus of definitely consigning postconciliar rifts to oblivion.

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The major seminary of Guadalajara is the largest in the world today.