

PAIX LITURGIQUE

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THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM IN INDONESIA

The celebration of the traditional liturgy is sometimes—wrongly—perceived to be a Western phenomenon. Yet, Catholic tradition has no borders, by definition. While its celebration was in place across the globe well before 2007 (the SSPX’s presence on every continent told as much), it really took off—under the term “extraordinary form of the Roman rite—after Benedict XVI’s *Motu Proprio*.

This month we’d like to take a look at the top Muslim country in the world: Indonesia. Here, the Latin Gregorian liturgy is regularly celebrated. Food for thought

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I – Overview

Indonesia numbers over 250 million inhabitants, the majority of whom are Muslim (87.2% according to a 2010 survey). In fact it is the top Muslim country in the world, ahead of Pakistan and India. Three centuries of Dutch colonial administration didn’t leave much room for Catholicism, though it had reached the region with Portuguese missionaries early in the sixteenth century. Roman Catholics now amount to 3%, or a solid seven million.

Yet the Church is present across the entire archipelago and amongst all ethnic groups. There are thirty seven dioceses and one cardinal, the retired bishop of Jakarta, Julius Darmaatmadja, SJ. As nearly everywhere else the traditional Mass was nearly totally abolished by the conciliar reforms. Yet it is now regularly celebrated in at least three dioceses: Bandung, on Java; Jakarta, the capital; and Pontianak, on Borneo. A fourth worship location, in the sultanate of Yogyakarta (Java), has recently been established as well.

Investigating a country that is both so far away and so different culturally is no easy task.

Thanks especially to the *Populus Summorum Pontificum* Facebook page, which is that of the international *Summorum Pontificum* Roman pilgrimage and has over 25,000 subscribers, we received confirmation that the traditional liturgy is indeed celebrated in Indonesia; were able to contact its often very young promoters. Just recently several photos of Masses celebrated in Indonesia—plenty of young people, mantillas, altar boys, choirs—were published on the Facebook page. Some of them accompany this letter.

From a traditional point of view, the SSPX had a mission over there in 2003. It led to a regular but infrequent celebration for about twenty people. To get a more precise idea of the situation, we explored as best we could the resources offered by the Internet and the social networks.

The faithful there explained that the bishops’ positions vary from one diocese to the next. In Jakarta, for instance, the church hierarchy has never condescended to answer petitioners’ mails, telephone calls, or requests for an audience. The priests who celebrate the traditional liturgy there are therefore often foreign missionary priests and the faithful generally keep from mentioning these Masses to avoid any diocesan unpleasantness. In Bandung, where there is a monthly Mass, the bishop gave his permission in 2009. In Pontianak, the Archbishop emeritus, Hieronymus Bumbun, a Capuchin, celebrates the traditional Mass.

The Jesuits, who exert a great influence in this country just as they do in the Philippines, have worked hard against the *Motu Proprio* in Indonesia: in 2007, Cardinal Darmaatmadja, Archbishop of Jakarta at the time, baldly claimed that *Summorum Pontificum* did not apply to his diocese. Nevertheless, their magazine, *Hidup* (Life), did devote an article to it in October 2011. This article, which in other respects was quite instructive, was clearly intended to dampen the curiosity that Benedict XVI’s text had aroused amongst the faithful. Here is the howler it maintains: that the *Motu Proprio* is merely . . . “a private initiative” on the part of the Sovereign Pontiff in which he means to use his authority to voice “the truth that he holds”—whereas in fact he judges this act to be so important that he states that he is acting “of his own accord” (*motu proprio*), in a personal decision. After correctly denouncing the modern liturgical abuses and the resource that

is the extraordinary form, the magazine nevertheless concludes that “many groups and leaders in the Church look askance at this Mass” since insistence on unity can “lead to a real risk of conflict and discord.” Lastly, introducing the extraordinary form into the parish is deemed “far more complicated” than the papal text indicates, since a pastoral approach cannot stay away from “taking into account the psychological, sociological, anthropological, and political aspects” of such a move.

This more or less open hostility from part of the Indonesian Catholic hierarchy towards the traditional liturgy seems, however, to have had only a restricted effect on the faithful, particularly the young, as our photos illustrate. In Bandung, one of the promoters of applying the *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum* may actually be one of Cardinal Darmaatmadja’s nephews

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II — The reflections of Paix Liturgique

1). Indonesian Catholics attracted to the traditional liturgy are a minority within a minority. As is often the case in such situations, they exhibit great solidarity, both amongst themselves and also with the broader *Summorum Pontificum* family. **The scarcity of their resources—they were recently looking online for a set of candelabra—is made up for by their great determination and enthusiasm.**

2) **The example of Indonesia opposes an obvious rebuttal to those who still attempt to limit the traditional liturgy question to a specific geographic area or social class.** Benedict XVI wished to return the use of the Latin Gregorian liturgy to the universal Church, which is gradually rediscovering it. While the efforts of French petitioners are praiseworthy—think of the faithful at Dunkerque who survived seven years of wandering before finally getting a just application of the *Motu Proprio*—what can we say of the efforts of the faithful in Bandung or Pontianak? They have no Chartres pilgrimage to restore hope, no Fontgombault or Le Barroux to draw from, no *Ecclesia Dei* communities to ask for advice and help. All they have is the faith, canon law, and the Internet to make requests that are misunderstood, and therefore badly received, by the clergy.

3) “[M]any groups and leaders in the Church look askance at this Mass” since insistence on unity can “lead to a real risk of conflict and discord.” The desire for a rite that expresses Catholic unity is divisive . . . This comment in the Indonesian Jesuits’ magazine is typical, and sheds light on **the heart of the problem, which is ideological: on the one hand there is a pseudo-unity based on a multiform and elusive new rite, while on the other hand there is the traditional Catholic unity centered on over a thousand years of Roman Mass.** Unity *more romano* allegedly jeopardizes the innovators’ “unity”. Such comments could just as well have been made in any diocesan rag! For fifty years now, those who speak only of inculturation, adaptation, and diversity shamelessly use one and the same ecclesiastical gobbledy-gook from one bishops’ conference to the next. The same prejudices are spread about and the same arguments are trotted out to prevent true peace from coming to our parishes.

4) Thanks be to God, from Puerto Rico to Jakarta, a true sense of the faith has enabled these laymen, in spite everything and everyone, to keep up the transmission of the liturgy and the catechism—in other words, *tradition*. Note that this movement is primarily one of laymen and families. Whether one likes it or not, **the “promotion of the laity” envisaged by Vatican II has produced magnificent fruits that the guardians of the “Spirit of Vatican II” had not anticipated: the upkeep of the traditional liturgy and catechism.** The most palpable fulfilment of the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* on the apostolate and role of laymen in the Church is the rise of the people of *Summorum Pontificum*.