

# PAIX LITURGIQUE

Letter 1379 published 3 June 2026

## THE TRADITIONAL LITURGY ATTRACTS THE YOUNG CONVERTS

### 245th WEEK: THE SENTINELS CONTINUE THEIR PRAYERS FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE TRADITIONAL MASS IN FRONT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PARIS

The recent pilgrimage to Chartres, with its two “lungs”—Notre-Dame de Chrétienté (20,000 pilgrims) and the Society of Saint Pius X (6,500)—continues to represent the most significant manifestation of a “*new Catholicism*.” Organizers and participating priests affirm that the proportion of young converts (whether newly baptized or formally baptized, who are discovering the faith, its practice, and the catechism) is steadily increasing.

Who are they? Father Éric Iborra, vicar of the parish of Saint-Roch in Paris, attempted to answer this question in an article he published last year, on February 4, 2025, in *Lex Orandi*, entitled “*New Converts: A Pastoral and Liturgical Challenge*” ([Les nouveaux convertis, un défi pastoral et liturgique](#)).

Like all parish priests, especially in Paris, he emphasizes the growing importance of catechetical, spiritual, and moral preparation of the numerous adults and teenagers being baptized (21,000 this year across France, more than the double of last year, including 810 in Paris, among whom more than 50 in Saint-Roch, a number that has remained stable since 2014). The increase in these baptisms “*is cause for celebration*,” he writes, “*but also for concern, as it partly reflects the considerable decline in the number of baptisms of infants*” (since 2000, they have fallen from 400,000 to 200,000, dropping to 90,000 during the Covid pandemic, when the French Episcopal Conference (CEF) prohibited their celebration). Some of these young people are doing their studies (either university or superior studies or professional training), others are already working. They have no complexes. “*These young people speak naturally about their spiritual quest with their peers*.” In a world adrift, they seem to be searching for certainty. They are identitarians, in the best sense of the word; in this case, they desire a true Catholic identity. Hence the success of traditionalism among them, not necessarily in an exclusive way, but also in an uninhibited way: “*Where their elders used to look for or suggest caveats on matters of doctrine, they demand firmness! They ask for exclamation marks, not question marks*.”

In Saint-Roch, where they have the choice, 80% opt for the old missal. “*I estimate*,” continues Father Iborra, “*that the proportion of catechumens baptized in a ceremony with the old missal is around 15% in our diocese. Why?*” The traditional liturgy offers greater respite from the banality of daily life because it allows more space for the sacred, thanks to the use of a specific language, Latin, and its own music, whether Gregorian chant or polyphonic. It is not so much about aesthetics, as one might think, but rather about grasping the beauty that emanates from celebrations rooted in a millennia-old tradition. This liturgy facilitates an understanding of the vertical dimension to which Christian communal prayer points. Moreover, its majestic slowness invites inner silence without hindering the active participation of the faithful, who are often deeply moved by its rites. Added to this is an appreciation for the doctrinal rigor of the preaching. For the rites themselves provide the orientation of its content: for example, the numerous genuflections before the consecrated species immediately convey the reality of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist. One might say that the Traditional Latin Mass is a “*total work of art*” directed at the senses, the mind, and ultimately, the soul.”

In Paris, many of these neophytes began their journey with online research. They found online lectures or catechisms (by Fathers Laguérie or Raffray, for example, or by Father Paul-Adrien, a Dominican). Then they looked for a parish that resonated with that message and ended up at Saint Roch, Saint-Nicolas, or Saint Eugène.

Lex orandi, lex credendi, and vice versa. They find it natural that a “*square*” liturgy corresponds to a clear and demanding doctrine. “*However, there are relatively few points of Catholic doctrine that they find difficult to accept*.” And regarding morality: “*It is evident that marital morality does not necessarily*

*correspond to their personal experience or that of those around them. However, this is not the obstacle one might imagine." Interestingly, they often seem to deplore the clergy's lack of firmness in promoting the faith. This is because one might think that "Catholic morality is less easy for them to live by than the 'non-morality' of our fluid society, but it is precisely this fluidity that for them can be unsettling in the long run because of the lack of points of reference it offers."*

And Father Iborra concludes: *"To the surprise of many in my generation, the traditional liturgy is no longer considered a very complicated intellectual exercise, difficult to grasp because it is based on Latin and medieval music."* Rather, it is the new liturgy that is sometimes perceived as too intellectual, even abstract, while the old missal conveys more emotions, especially through its many concrete rites. These young people don't want to find in the church what they already know in society. They want to be transported to another place, to Heaven!

Bishop Lagrange, the late Bishop of Gap, humorously observed that young people discovering the Traditional Latin Mass, in amazement, called it the *"new Mass."* They don't realize how right they are, for it is true that the Tridentine liturgy breathes a sense of perpetual newness. It is this eternally young liturgy that you defend, dear Parisian sentinels, against those who want to restrict or suppress it, you who pray your rosaries at 10 rue du Cloître-Notre-Dame, from Monday to Friday, from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., at Saint-Georges de La Villette, 114 avenue Simon Bolivar, on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:00 p.m., in front of Notre-Dame du Travail, on Sundays at 6:15 p.m.