



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

Saint Adelaide Church



Where Babies Cry

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The following is a very brief summary of my experience at Saint Adelaide Parish in Peabody Massachusetts where the the Latin Mass of the Ages is still celebrated every Sunday at noon, as it has been celebrated for the better part of the 2000 years preceding the many regrettable changes and omissions in the Mass that followed Vatican II. The *Novus Ordo* Mass is still celebrated at St. Adelaide's, but it is at the noon Latin Mass that you find, once again, the cry of babies accompanied by so many young parents. It is a welcome sound that had grown more and more faint as the years passed and the congregations in virtually every Catholic church following Vatican II grew progressively older ... and fewer. Following those “progressive”, “liberating”, and “heady” days of Vatican II’s “*aggiornamento*,”— that insidious inflow of the World into the Church — many Catholics, especially women, had chosen careers over children, and as their work years ended they found themselves comforted with the cold security of a monthly check rather than the warm and loving arms of children and grandchildren. Year by year, an ever older and ever-thinning congregation grew grayer and whiter; the pews became sparse — and then the cry of children stopped altogether. It was a terrible silence. It remains so.

Listen to it carefully. It is a silence that speaks of unspeakably beautiful things that might have been, but never were; the silence of a gamble that, late in the game, and played against the odds, had been lost. It is what we encounter when we enter most of our own local churches: much, much, talking among the mostly elderly — but not the cry of a child, even if one could be heard above the clamor of irreverent voices.

It is different at St. Adelaide's. You will encounter two beautiful responsorials, if you will: the sacred silence of a devout congregation — and the crying of children. There is life; new life, and young life. Even life aborning in the wombs of young

pregnant women. Fathers carry their youngest sons to the bathrooms, just as mothers carry their daughters. Sometimes the priest cannot be heard — and it is wonderful! Little ones, learning how to receive Holy Communion, precede their fathers and mothers in the Communion lines, hands devoutly folded, ever looking back for reassurance, and dad’s hand is always gently guiding them forward. You wish to God that you yourself, despite your most devout recollection, possessed that absolute reverence you see in the child!

This is just a small vignette of Holy Mass at Saint Adelaide’s Church. It is the Latin Mass that engenders such love and devotion, such piety before the sacred mysteries celebrated upon that holy Altar in a language as ancient as the Church; in the language that is the language *of* the Church. You will see no girl “altar servers” — only Altar Boys and Acolytes in traditional black and white cassocks, surplices, and stoles. You will see a procession led by a young man holding high a Crucifix, and after him, Altar Boys with lit candles; you see a gently swinging thurible billowing incense and hear the clanging of the chains as the smoke rises from the procession to the very Altar of God in Heaven. You will see men, women, and children come to worship the One, True, Living God ... and nothing and no one less.

You will find the patrimony of your fathers and forefathers, and their fathers and forefathers through centuries and millennia, and worship God as they had worshipped! You will find your home.

And you will know it.

Geoffrey K. Mondello

Editor

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Feast of St. Thomas of Aquinas, Confessor and Doctor



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