

Day 166 – Wednesday, Sept 2

I came across this six part series on the history of the Eucharistic Liturgy. And I thought you might be interested

By Alfred McBride, O.Praem.; St. Anthony Messenger Press

5--REFORMATION AND THE TRIDENTINE MASS It took the Church 28 years to gather to its energies and open the Council of Trent in 1545 to deal with the Reformation. The Council Fathers called for a renewal of the liturgy. In 1570 Pope Pius V responded to this call that would be a standard book for the celebration of Mass for the Western Church. Everything in his decree pertained to the priest celebrant and his action at the altar including the Liturgy of the Word. The participation of the people would be devotional rather than liturgical. The Mass text was in Latin. (This sturdy Tridentine Mass [named for Trent]) endured up to Vatican II.) The Jesuits introduced Baroque architecture in which the choir stalls, screens and walls were removed. The distance between altar and assembly was shortened so that only an altar railing separated them. The altar was placed against the wall, which was lavishly decorated from floor to ceiling. The tabernacle rested on the altar and above it was a niche provided for exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. A soaring pulpit was situated near the middle of the Church indicating the importance of a sermon but not a homily. This worship space glowed with self-confidence and triumph. It suited the mood of this Counter Reformation. The church was a throne room and the assembly, the audience. They were treated with the music of Palestrina, Haydn and Mozart. The Protestants had Bach, but also sang hundreds of new hymns triumphantly. Sadly, most Eucharist's were "Low Masses," generally without music and which the assembly attended in silence. Catholics turned to new schools of spirituality to satisfy their spiritual longings: the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the Carmelite schools and that of St. Francis de Sales. Eventually, in the 19th century, it became clear that a return to the sources of the liturgy was needed.

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein