

A Response to Fr. Krenzke II

7. “For example, among other things, the maniple (worn over the left arm) was originally a handy cloth for wiping the celebrant’s brow of perspiration in the hot climates—in time it no longer served that purpose everywhere and became a mere decorated fixture with no practical purpose and therefore now was no longer useful.”
 - Reducing all things liturgical to mere *use* is to fundamentally misunderstand the nature of liturgical rite. This would place the Sacred Liturgy in the hands of committees who would take votes to determine if they wanted something in the liturgy or not. In other words, they would manufacture liturgy according to their ideas of what was contemporary, and not receive liturgy for what it really is—a gift from God. “Only respect for the liturgy’s fundamental unspontaneity and pre-existing identity can give us what we hope for: the feast in which the great reality comes to us that we ourselves do not manufacture but receive as a gift.” (Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*)
 - Reducing all things liturgical to mere use leads also to very inconsistent thinking and practice. For example, if the liturgists were to use Father’s thinking in a consistent way, they would eliminate candles from the Mass as well as the maniple, thinking that electric lights make candles a “mere decorative fixture.”
 - There is a practical purpose to the maniple, at least in the old Mass. It signifies to the faithful that the Mass is in progress. When, for example, the priest takes the maniple off after the Gospel in order to preach, he signifies to the faithful that they are going to receive his words, and not the words of God. He also descends from the altar, looks the people in the eye, and makes a vernacular Sign of the Cross, all to signify that the Mass is being interrupted for a time. It is true that the maniple would not serve this function in the New Mass, since the sermon in that rite is part of the Liturgy of the Word, and thus not even the Sign of the Cross is used. This is one reason I prefer the old way, since on my best day anything I said could not compare to the words in the Missal.
 - Finally on this point, we should note something which was said in the Second Vatican Council: “There must be no innovations unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them...” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, # 23) I sincerely doubt that a case could be made that the good of the Church genuinely and certainly required that the maniple should be suppressed. It is a wonderful symbol which reminds the priest that the cares and sorrows of his office should be borne with patience in view of the heavenly reward. This is expressed in the prayer which the priest prays as he places the maniple on his wrist: “Lord, may I worthily bear the maniple of tears and sorrow so as to receive the reward of my labor with rejoicing.”
8. “The lengthy prayers at the foot of the altar beginning Mass and the Gospel of John after the dismissal were originally a priest’s private preparation before Mass and a profound Gospel reflection on the Incarnation after Mass. Therefore these were dropped as well in the New Mass.”
 - Because a prayer is lengthy does not make it bad or unfitting for the liturgy. If that were so then there would be no Canon of the Mass.
9. “Style and reverence for the sacred mysteries for both presider and congregation go hand-in-hand. A presider needs to pray his part in a manner that is personal, warm and inviting, whether in Latin or English. He displays this attitude clearly from the moment of the opening sing of the cross, etc.”
 - It is true that the Prayers at the Foot were a part of the priest’s private preparation for Mass, and were said only in the sanctuary, prior to 1570. However, they were moved into the church at the demand of the faithful, who wanted to participate in the priest’s preparation and make those prayers their preparation also.
 - The idea that a “profound Gospel reflection on the Incarnation” would suddenly become useless in 1970 has no merit.
 - The word “presider” does not fit with the old Mass. There is a good argument that it does not fit in the new rite either. In our rite, it is clear that only the priest can consecrate the Holy Eucharist. The correct word should be “celebrant.” “Presider” (literally from the Latin “one who sits in front”) implies that the priest is a mere figurehead, just one to lead the prayers, and that without a congregation there would be no Mass.
 - How does the celebrant pray in Latin so that the faithful appreciate his personal, warm and inviting manner?
 - The idea that the style and “warmth” of the priest should set the tone for the liturgy is precisely what we try to avoid in the old Mass. The faithful should be able to go to Mass without the burden of having to deal with the celebrant’s mood, whether it be his morose plodding through the prayers or his insufferable cheerfulness at the Sacrifice of the Lord.
 - The gist of the last part of the article implies that reverence is the result of personality—in particular a warm and inviting personality. This is a misunderstanding of reverence. The word comes from the Latin, and is a deponent verb, one of the words in Latin for “fear.” It is deponent in the sense that it is not possible to tell if the reaction of fear is done by the person, or if the reverence is done to him. Reverence has nothing to do with warm, inviting or schmoozing celebrants.
10. “Since prayer is communion with God, a conversational style with natural inflections decidedly enhances the worship.”
 - Contrast this thought with that of the Venerable John Henry Newman. “To rush into His presence, to address Him familiarly, to urge Him, to strive to make our duty lie in one direction when it lies in another, to handle rudely and practice upon His holy Word, to trifle with truth, to treat conscience lightly, to take liberties (as it may be called) with anything that is God’s, all irreverence, profaneness, unscrupulousness, wantonness, is represented in Scripture not only as a sin, but as felt, noticed and quickly returned...” (*Parochial and Plain Sermons*, 4.31)