

**Bishop Raymundo J. Peña's statement**

**Re: Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Letter on the "Latin Mass"**

**Date: July 7, 2007**

The long awaited Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XVI in regard to the use of the Roman Missal that was in place prior to the Vatican Council was published today at the Vatican. It becomes effective on the Feast of the Holy Cross, September 14, 2007.

The Holy Father explains that there are two forms of the rule of prayer of the Roman Rite: the Roman Missal of Pope St. Pius V promulgated by Pope Blessed John XXIII in 1962 (the extraordinary form), which was never abrogated, and the Roman Missal of Pope Paul VI promulgated by the Servant of God Pope John Paul II in 2001 (the ordinary form).

Pope Benedict permits the use of the extraordinary form more widely than heretofore, in order to promote unity in the Church by reaching out to those members of the Christian faithful who feel they are nourished more effectively in the Eucharistic celebration that follows this form.

He urges pastors to accommodate those parishioners who request this form of celebrating the Eucharist, and insists that the priest celebrating it be sufficiently knowledgeable both of the liturgical form and of the Latin language. He insists, as well, that bishops safeguard the integrity of the Eucharistic celebration that takes place either using the ordinary form, which will continue to be the one most frequently used, or the extraordinary form.

In the Diocese of Brownsville which covers the Rio Grande Valley, I will discuss the Holy Father's letter with our priests at our regular Assembly in the fall. We will then determine how we may best implement its content, given the needs expressed by our parishioners and the number of priests who are sufficiently familiar with the extraordinary form and the Latin language.

I am grateful to Pope Benedict for this pastoral initiative; our priests and I are one with him in our efforts and our prayer "that they all may be one."

Bishop Raymundo J. Peña