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Bishop's Low Mass in the Extraordinary Form Marking the Implementation of *Summorum Pontificum*

September 15, 2007 ~ Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Dear Friends in Christ,

To the most Sorrowful Mother at the foot of the Cross is entrusted, in today's Gospel, the faithful disciple. She in her solicitude accepts us under the mantle of her maternal love – this adoption being one of the first fruits of the Victory of Christ's Passion. Mary is our mother forever. On this day of *Our Lady of Sorrows* we have come to celebrate and renew the holy and eternal sacrifice of the Mass.

Mary, as our intercessor and inspiration leads us to the foot of the Cross, helping us to offer Jesus Christ to the Father. *At the Cross her station keeping*, the Mother of God is pierced with Christ. We too, dear friends, want to be actively and consciously engaged as full participants in the same unending sacrifice which unfolds even now – the summit of our worship - with Mary, through Jesus, to the Eternal Father.

Mary, through her most sublime sufferings, merits at the Cross the first pristine grace of the newly won redemption. In the moment of her living martyrdom, Mary consents to her Son's request to be our mother, and we become children of grace.

The Cross is a Victory and Triumph beyond measure, which continues to pour out upon us, as a font, the Blood of Christ for the sake of our holiness, and so that the work of the Church may be continued. In his homily at World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the power of the Cross as an explosion of love. The crucifixion of Jesus, the Pope said, was "like inducing nuclear fission in the very heart of being." "Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil," the Holy Father said, "can trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world."

Thus we stand, even today, in the pulsing and salvific shock waves of Christ's triumph, clinging to His sorrowful mother – our sorrowful mother - who is able to teach us what it means to be united with the sacrifice and sufferings of the Lord.

The occasion for our gathering is in thanksgiving for the promulgation of the *Motu Proprio* of Pope Benedict XVI by which he has renewed the Church's devotion and attentive love to the form of the Mass known by the faithful for centuries. Under the Pontiffs this "Mass of St. Pius V" underwent certain modifications over the ages, but its continuity with what we call *Novus Ordo* makes it precious for us all. In a magnificent way, it captures the universality of the Sacred Liturgy through the efficacious use of inspired, transcendent images and a common Latin language. Beginning yesterday, September 14, 2007, *Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross*, it is the "*Extraordinary Form*" of the Roman Rite of the Mass, and it sits most worthily aside of the

vernacular *New Order*, likewise affirmed by the Pope.

Summorum Pontificum cura ad hoc tempus usque semper fuit ...! It [is] the care of the Supreme Pontiffs, always and to the present time, ... that the Church offer worthy worship to the Divine majesty, “ad laudem et gloriam nominis Sui,” et “ad utilitatem totius Ecclesiae Suae sanctae;” “for the praise and glory of His name” and “for the good of all His Holy Church.”

Yes, the Supreme Pontiff has the care of the sacred liturgy. Upon him as Vicar of Jesus Christ rests this most weighty mandate for the worship of God. This morning, with filial awe, we together wish to be an echo of his Pastoral care for the good of the Christ’s Holy Church . *Summorum Pontificum!* These words remind us of a paternal prerogative the Primacy of which we may not ignore. At the same time, the text and tone of the Pope’s announcement reveals the longing and solicitude by which the Holy Father desires to extend the riches of the Church’s heritage. Calling us to open wide our hearts, he makes himself the bridge to reconciliation.

With no diminution of the authority of the Second Vatican Council, we embark on this morning’s celebration to encounter the beauty and power of these sacred rites, the form of which was last visited by the Blessed Pope John XXIII. For nearly thirty years it has been my privilege to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in *Novus Ordo*. I profess my love for this Mass of my priesthood, even as I embrace with trust and hope the opportunity to celebrate the Mass according to the older books.

My study of the extraordinary form has led me to a greater appreciation of the rich meaning of the priestly action; the power of the words. I have become more aware of the great cloud of witnesses to which we are united in the Holy Sacrifice; of my prayer for the living and the dead. It has deepened my attention to the manner in which I continue to offer daily Mass. We are blessed in the Diocese to have the pastoral assistance of the *Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest*. The Oratory of Old St. Patrick provides already an opportunity for the Faithful to experience this form of the Sacred Liturgy in a setting much like that of the “personal parishes” to which Pope Benedict has alluded in his Apostolic Letter.

In unity with the Pope, the local bishop is moderator of the Sacred Liturgy in his Diocese. He must verify and strengthen the fidelity of the Rites in accord with the directives of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. As bishop I pray and will work for a peaceful and serene implementation of all that the Church allows. With the help of the Holy Spirit may each priest become daily more and more a true image of the High Priest in whose person he stands at the altar.

We priests must provide and protect with renewed devotion and fidelity all to which the Holy People of God are entitled in the careful and holy celebration of the sacred liturgy, whether in the Ordinary or the Extraordinary Form. The Mass is not from us. It flows from the Cross of Christ, and each day we must breathe in Christ. We must become more fully children of the Father, sons of the Church, sons of Mary. In this way our actions within the Mass and outside of the Mass, will flow from Him and bring Him to others.

We also pray that Pope Benedict’s invitation to use the older Missal will be a cause for unity among us – even here in Kansas City – and that the celebration of the Mass, all the sacraments, and the Divine Office according to the earlier books will bring about a saving explosion and manifestation of the Crucified love of Jesus Christ. By this miracle of His grace may there be triggered in us those transformations which little by little will bring about an authentic and

lasting reconciliation.

To Our Lady of Sorrows we entrust these prayers. We gaze upon her, forever our Mother Mary, who ushers us to the foot of the Cross, and brings us with hope to Him who is our Reconciliation to the Father of Mercies.