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THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN
AT THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM

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From the General Introduction

These papers, commissioned by the International Federation *Una Voce*, are offered to stimulate and inform debate about the 1962 Missal among Catholics ‘attached to the ancient Latin liturgical traditions’, and others interested in the liturgical renewal of the Church. They are not to be taken to imply personal or moral criticism of those today or in the past who have adopted practices or advocated reforms which are subjected to criticism. In composing these papers we adopt the working assumption that our fellow Catholics act in good will, but that nevertheless a vigorous and well-informed debate is absolutely necessary if those who act in good will are to do so in light of a proper understanding of the issues.

The authors of the papers are not named, as the papers are not the product of any one person, and also because we prefer them to be judged on the basis of their content, not their authorship.

The International Federation *Una Voce* humbly submits the opinions contained in these papers to the judgement of the Church.

The Participation of Children at the Extraordinary Form: Abstract

Since the Extraordinary Form attracts many young families, celebrations are often characterised by the presence of many children. The EF cannot be adapted to children in the way the Ordinary Form sometimes is, but it has certain advantages in respect to children, notably its use of non-verbal forms of communication, the predictability of the Rites, and the relative informality of the congregation during Mass. The powerful impression made on children by the solemn and expressive ceremonies finds a precedent in the experiences of children in Scripture, when they attended the solemn reading of the Law, were blessed by our Lord, and when they proclaimed His Kingship at the Entry into Jerusalem. These also point to the objective value of the liturgy to children, including the many blessings given to the congregation in the liturgy. Above all, a consistent experience of the liturgy, with adults offering a model of an appropriate engagement with it, is a ‘school of prayer’ for children, as for adults.

Comments can be sent to

positio@fiuv.org

Introduction

1. Since the liturgy is both the ‘source’ and the ‘summit’ of the Christian life,¹ it is an indispensable means, as well as destination, in drawing the young into a full realisation of their Christian vocation. This paper will argue that the Extraordinary Form has special value in this task, as witnessed by the experience not only of past generations, but that of Catholics today attached to this Form, whose families, as Darió, Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos remarked, ‘frequently are enriched by many children’.²
2. The Congregation for Divine Worship’s influential 1973 *Directory for Masses with Children* observes:

In the upbringing of children in the Church a special difficulty arises from the fact that liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist, cannot fully exercise their inherent pedagogical force upon children. Although the vernacular may now be used at Mass, still the words and signs have not been sufficiently adapted to the capacity of children.

In fact, even in daily life children do not always understand all their experiences with adults but rather may find them boring. It cannot therefore be expected of the liturgy that everything must always be intelligible to them. Nonetheless there is a fear of spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are barely comprehensible; for recent psychological study has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood, because of the special religious receptivity proper to those years.³
3. The *Directory* proposes, notably, the adaptation of liturgical texts for children, and the stressing of ‘human values’⁴ rather than supernatural realities, as being easier for children to grasp. Such adaptations are not possible in the Extraordinary Form, and it will be proposed here that it can overcome the problem in other ways.

¹ Second Vatican Council: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: 10, 14

² *Latin Mass Magazine* May 2004, Interview with Darió, Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos.

³ Congregation for Divine Worship (1973) *Directory for Masses with Children 2*: ‘Quoad pueros in Ecclesia educandos peculiaris difficultas ex eo oritur, quod celebrationes liturgicae, praesertim eucharisticae, vim innatam paedagogicam in pueros plene exercere non possunt. Quamvis nunc in Missa sermonem patrium adhibere liceat, tamen verba et signa captui puerorum non satis aptata sunt.

‘Re quidem vera pueri etiam in vita sua cotidiana non semper omnia intellegunt, quae cum adultis experiuntur, quin iis ex hoc taedium oriatur. Inde nec pro liturgia postulari potest ut semper omnia et singulari iis intellegibilia esse debeant. Tamen damnum spiritale timendum est, si pueri per annos in Ecclesia iterum iterumque vix comprehensibilia experiantur; recens enim psychologia probavit, quam profunde pueri experientia religiosa infantiae et primae pueritiae formentur vi capacitatis religiosae singularis, qua gaudent.’

⁴ *Directory for Masses with Children* 9. The phrase is ‘valores humani’, contrasted with ‘valores christiani’.

Children and verbal communication

4. The Extraordinary Form is not a rite designed to be verbally comprehensible which fails, in the case of children, to be so. Rather, it is a Rite which does not have verbal comprehension as a primary aim.
5. Thus the silent Canon communicates to the congregation non-verbally, in an extremely powerful way.⁵ Although it is true, as the *Directory* notes, that children lack experience in interpreting the ‘signs’ used in the liturgy, the atmosphere created by the silent Canon, together with the gestures of the priest, the use of incense and bell, and the response of the other worshippers to all of this, is, as a collection of signs, uniquely suited to convey even to very young children the solemnity, holiness, and importance of what is taking place.
6. Taken as a whole, particularly when celebrated in its more solemn forms, and ideally in the context of a traditionally furnished church, and accompanied by well-executed sacred music, the Extraordinary Form offers an immensely rich, attractive, atmospheric, and symbolically charged experience for all the senses.
7. The Extraordinary Form’s giving precedence to non-verbal forms of communication makes it more accessible to children, as to the less educated in general. They still, of course, have much to learn about the liturgy, by formal or informal liturgical catechesis, but in the context of the Extraordinary Form the power of the ceremonies to communicate would be lessened, not enhanced, if they were simplified, or made the subject of *ex tempore* commentary. As the Catholic educational theorist Maria Montessori advised, ‘teaching the Mass must not be mixed up with participation in it’.⁶

Conveying supernatural realities

8. Turning to the question of human and Christian values, the *Directory* seeks to avoid the boredom of *incomprehension*⁷ by directing children’s attention to themes they can more easily understand. Experience has indicated another danger, however: of boredom arising

⁵ See Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph, Cardinal Ratzinger) *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) p215-6: ‘Anyone who has experienced a church united in the silent praying of the Canon will know what a really filled silence is. It is at once a loud and penetrating cry to God and a Spirit-filled act of prayer. Here everyone does pray the Canon together, albeit in a bond with the special task of the priestly ministry. Here everyone is united, laid hold of by Christ, and led by the Holy Spirit into that common prayer to the Father which is the true sacrifice—the love that reconciles and unites God and the world.’ See FIUV Positio 9: *Silence and Inaudibility in the Extraordinary Form*.

⁶ Maria Montessori *The Mass Explained to Children* (Kettering OH: Angelico Press, 2015) p4 (first published in 1933). Cf. ‘They [*sc.* adults] still think it necessary to interfere with them, continually and directly, to keep them from doing harm; and teachers imagine that the child is incapable of doing good without their exhortation and example.’ These remarks are related to an attitude fundamental to Montessori’s educational philosophy: ‘The fundamental help in development, especially with little children of three years of age, is not to interfere. Interference stops activity and stops concentration.’ (Maria Montessori: *The Child, Society and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings* (Clio Press, 1989) p16.

⁷ The problem of boredom (‘taedium’) is a recurring concern in the *Directory*. As well as the boredom of incomprehension (2), it notes the danger of boredom in hearing the same person read many texts (24), and even the ‘danger of boredom’ (‘periculum taedii’) in daily attendance at Mass. For the reasons set out in the paper, the Extraordinary Form does not, in the experience of the families attending it regularly, face the same difficulty.

from *banality*. What is most engaging for children, in fact, is the *intriguing*: like a traditional children's story, something should have depths beyond what is immediately understood, promising greater comprehension from close attention. Further to the last section, 'understanding' here must be separated from the idea of 'being able to articulate', since many of our most important experiences are those which cannot be fully, or at all, articulated. As Louis Bouyer noted:

the main business of the liturgy is not to teach us this or that lesson easily converted into pat formulas; it is to place the faithful, without them quite knowing how, into a certain state of mind which it would be perfectly fruitless to try to recreate by explaining it.⁸

9. These observations help us to imagine what children might have made of the liturgical or paraliturgical experiences in which they were included in Scripture: of attending the solemn reading of the Law⁹ or of public penance,¹⁰ of being blessed by our Lord,¹¹ and of proclaiming His kingship at His entry into Jerusalem.¹²

⁸ *The Memoirs of Louis Bouyer: from youth and conversion to Vatican II, the Liturgical Reform, and after*, trans. John Pepino (Kettering OH: Angelico Press, 2015) p67

⁹ Deuteronomy 31:12 (at the command of Moses): 'And the people being all assembled together, both men and women, children and strangers, that are within thy gates: that hearing they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and keep, and fulfill all the words of this law.' ('Et in unum omni populo congregato, tam viris quam mulieribus, parvulis, et advenis, qui sunt intra portas tuas: ut audientes discant, et timeant Dominum Deum vestrum, et custodiant, impleantque omnes sermones legis huius.') Cf. Joshua 8:35 (at the command of Joshua), and 2 Kings 23:1-2 (at the command of King Josiah).

¹⁰ Joel 2:15-7: 'Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones, and them that suck at the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her bridal chamber. Between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep, and shall say: Spare, O Lord, spare thy people: and give not thy inheritance to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them.' ('Canite tuba in Sion sanctificate ieiunium vocate coetum. Congregate populum sanctificate ecclesiam coadunate senes congregare parvulos et sugentes ubera egrediatu r sponsus de cubili suo et sponsa de thalamo suo. Inter vestibulum et altare plorabunt sacerdotes ministri Domini et dicent parce Domine populo tuo et ne des hereditatem tuam in obprobrium ut dominantur eis nations.') This is part of the Epistle read in the Extraordinary Form on Ash Wednesday. Cf. Jonah 3:5-8.

¹¹ Mark 10:13-16: 'And they brought to him young children, that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them that brought them. Whom when Jesus saw, he was much displeased and saith to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter into it. And embracing them and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them.' ('Et offerebant illi parvulos ut tangeret illos discipuli autem comminabantur offerentibus. Quos cum videret Iesus indigne tulit et ait illis sinite parvulos venire ad me et ne prohibueritis eos talium est enim regnum Dei. Amen dico vobis quisque non receperit regnum Dei velut parvulus non intrabit in illud. Et complexans eos et inponens manus super illos benedicebat eos.') Cf. Matthew 19:13-15, and Luke 18:15-16 (referring to 'infantes'). Our Lord's own experience of the liturgy as a child should also be noted, as we are told that, at the age of twelve (if not also at an earlier age), he made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem with his parents for the Passover, and became familiar with the Temple and its scholars (Luke 2:41-7). Children have an important role in the Jewish celebration of the Passover, since it is the youngest of the family who must ask the 'Four Questions' about the significance of the celebration. It does not seem too extravagant to connect this liturgical role of the youngest with the questioning of the Doctors of the Law by the child Jesus in the Temple.

¹² Matthew 21:15-16: 'And the chief priests and scribes, seeing the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying: Hosanna to the son of David; were moved with indignation. And said to him: Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus said to them: Yea, have you never read: Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' ('Videntes autem principes sacerdotum et scribae mirabilia quae fecit, et pueros clamantes in templo, et dicentes: Hosanna filio David: indignati sunt, et dixerunt ei: Audis quid isti dicunt? Jesus autem dixit eis: Utique. Numquam legistis: Quia ex ore infantium et lactentium perfecisti laudem?') Our Lord is quoting Ps. 8:3.

10. These children would not have been able to expound the theological meaning of these experiences; they would, nonetheless, have understood them at a level appropriate to their age, thanks to the ‘special religious receptivity’ the *Directory* notes. They would have absorbed the tremendous solemnity attached to the Law, the heartfelt penance, Christ’s great holiness and love for them when He ‘embraced them and ...blessed them’, and the eschatological joy and hope of His entry into Jerusalem.
11. Absorbing these ideas would have had great transformative potential for them, and not only does our Lord defend children’s participation in both New Testament examples, but holds them up as models of those who receive the Kingdom, and as instruments of God in their proclamation of the Saviour.¹³
12. These experiences offer a parallel to the liturgical experiences of children attending the Extraordinary Form today. One is reminded of Pope St John Paul II’s remark about the use of Latin, which ‘through its dignified character elicited a profound sense of the Eucharistic Mystery.’¹⁴ This ‘sense’ is certainly not limited to adult members of the congregation.
13. They also serve to answer the question of whether it would be better not to take small children to church at all,¹⁵ as has been the practice at certain historical periods.¹⁶ Children receive graces from witnessing the liturgy, and also from prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, the making of a spiritual communion, the use of holy water, the occasional veneration of relics after Mass, the many blessings which form part of the liturgy,¹⁷ and the experience of a consecrated building and its blessed devotional images.

Formality and informality in the liturgy

14. One important contrast between the Ordinary and the Extraordinary Forms is in the role of formality in each. In the Extraordinary Form there is great formality in what is going

¹³ See the texts quoted in Note 9 and 10 above.

¹⁴ Pope St John Paul II Encyclical *Dominicae Cene* (1980) 10: ‘indole sua dignitatis plena altum sensum Mysterii eucharistici excitavit.’ Cf. Pope St John Paul II Encyclical *Oriente Lumen* (1995), 11, on the liturgy of the Eastern Churches: ‘The lengthy duration of the celebrations, the repeated invocations, everything expresses gradual identification with the mystery celebrated with one’s whole person.’ (‘Extractum longius celebrationum tempus, iteratae invocationes, omnia denique comprobant aliquem paulatim in celebratum mysterium ingredi tota sua cum persona.’)

¹⁵ See for example Geoffrey Hull *The Banished Heart* p321, n.2, where he notes ‘responsible parents ... charitably refrain from bringing babies to church services’, and deprecates parents who do bring them. Surprisingly, Hull is also a supporter of the practice of giving Holy Communion to infants in the Eastern Churches (p300).

¹⁶ The possibility of leaving infants and small children at home depends on the availability of multiple options for Mass a short distance from the home, since both parents (and any domestic servants) need to fulfil their Sunday obligation. The sociologist Callum Brown notes that mothers in Britain were effectively excluded from the mid-morning Anglican service in the 19th and early 20th centuries, above all by the need to prepare Sunday lunch, whereas Catholic mothers could attend an early morning Mass. Callum G. Brown *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, 2nd Ed. (London: Routledge, 2009) p161. Such possibilities do not exist for many Catholics today, particularly those attached to the Extraordinary Form.

¹⁷ In addition to the blessing of the congregation in the concluding Rites, the congregation at Mass celebrated in the Extraordinary Form may be said to receive a blessing at the Asperges or Vidi Aquam, at the Pax, and on the other occasions when the celebrant, having kissed the Altar, passes the peace of Christ to the congregation with the words ‘Dominus vobiscum’. See Positio 19: *The Kiss of Peace* 1, 9.

on in the sanctuary, but the behaviour of the congregation is not governed by binding rules about bodily posture; there are few, if any, responses; and, as Pope Pius XII reiterated,¹⁸ the Faithful are free to say their own prayers.

15. The Ordinary Form, particularly when presented to children, allows for many options and a degree of spontaneity in its words and action, but efforts are often made to impose a more complex structure of behaviour on the congregation, with detailed instructions as to posture, a great many responses, and even gestures.
16. The structured and predictable nature of the Extraordinary Form's texts and ceremonies facilitates the gaining of familiarity with ceremonies which are themselves deeply expressive and dramatic. The relative informality of the nave, in turn, is less demanding on the behaviour, particularly, of small children, who need neither be forced to perform a great many actions which they do not understand, nor be interrupted in a more meaningful contemplative engagement with the liturgy.

Conclusion

17. The Faithful attached to the Extraordinary Form are in general very conscious of their obligation to ensure their children receive adequate catechesis,¹⁹ including timely explanations of the liturgy, and to maintain the practice of family prayers, which serves as both a spiritual and practical preparation for the liturgy, in inculcating habits of concentration and quiet.
18. Nevertheless, explanations of the liturgy have little value without repeated exposure to it, and it is the liturgy itself which has the power to transform our children, as the supreme 'school of prayer',²⁰ a special time of grace, and a reflection of the eternal liturgy of heaven.
19. It has often been noted that children seem more inclined to quiet—whether it be very young children playing quietly while Mass is proceeding, or older children attending

¹⁸ Pope Pius XII Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) 108: 'So varied and diverse are men's talents and characters that it is impossible for all to be moved and attracted to the same extent by community prayers, hymns and liturgical services. Moreover, the needs and inclinations of all are not the same, nor are they always constant in the same individual. Who, then, would say, on account of such a prejudice, that all these Christians cannot participate in the Mass nor share its fruits? On the contrary, they can adopt some other method which proves easier for certain people; for instance, they can lovingly meditate on the mysteries of Jesus Christ or perform other exercises of piety or recite prayers which, though they differ from the sacred rites, are still essentially in harmony with them.' ('Ingenium, indoles ac mens hominum tam varia sunt atque ab-similia, ut non omnes queant precibus, canticis sacrisque actionibus, communiter habitis, eodem modo moveri ac duci Ac praeterea animorum necessitates et propensa eorum studia non eadem in omnibus sunt, neque in singulis semper eaderr permanent. Quis igitur dixerit, praeiudicata eiusmodi opinionum compulsus, tot christianos non posse Eucharisticum participare Sacri icium, eiusque perfrui beneficiis? At ii alia ratione utique possunt, quae faciliior nonnullis evadit; ut, verbi gratia, Iesu Christi mysteria pie meditando, vel alia peragendo pietatis exercitia aliasque fundendo preces, quae, etsi forma a sacris ritibus differunt, natura tamen sua cum iisdem congruunt.')

¹⁹ Cf. Deuteronomy 6:6-7: 'And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: And thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising.' ('Eruntque verba haec quae ego praecipio tibi hodie in corde tuo. Et narrabis ea filiis tuis et mediteris sedens in domo tua et ambulans in itinere dormiens atque consurgens.')

²⁰ Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, Wednesday, 4th May 2011.

quietly to it—at celebrations of the Extraordinary Form. This can even be seen in the case of young children attending this Form for the first time. This is not surprising, since young children will not so easily understand the need to be quiet in an environment which is not itself quiet.

20. For these reasons the removal of children from part of Mass for a paraliturgical ‘children’s liturgy’ is alien to the Extraordinary Form.²¹ The ideal is, rather, that children absorb the liturgy and see adults they know and respect (ideally their own parents) assisting at it, as models to imitate. This also serves to underline the point, essential in holding the interest of children as they grow up, that the liturgy is not something to be left behind on approaching adulthood: it is an adult activity.
21. The success of the Extraordinary Form in relation to children is, inevitably, not easy to quantify; what is evident is the large number of vocations from communities attached to it. If nothing else, these demonstrate clearly the truth of Pope Benedict’s assertion:
that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them.²²

²¹ Similarly alien is the use of sound-proofed rooms for small children, which separate them from other worshippers and, above all, from the atmosphere created by the liturgy.

²² Pope Benedict XVI *Letter to Bishops* accompanying the Motu Proprio *Summorum Pontificum*, 2007.

Appendix A: How to facilitate children's engagement with the Extraordinary Form

This paper has noted that the Extraordinary Form cannot be adapted for children in the way the Ordinary Form can be, with specially-composed or selected texts, and further that it is alien to the practice of the Extraordinary Form to remove children from part of Mass to participate in a 'children's liturgy'. Rather, preparation above all *outside* the liturgy will assist children both to attend quietly to it, and to understand its structure and symbols. It may well be asked what can be done *inside* the liturgy, where children are present, to assist them, not only by parents and teachers, but by parishes and celebrants.

It should first be noted that there are many books available, some first published before the Second Vatican Council, some of more recent composition, which are designed, with beautiful pictures, simple prayers, and brief explanations, to assist children in following the ancient Mass both outside it (as catechetical tools), and inside it.

From a pastor's point of view the most important consideration may simply be the *timing* of Mass. Small children's capacity to concentrate, and their good behaviour, is critically affected by their need for food and sleep, and Masses scheduled over mealtimes or times when small children would otherwise be asleep (whether in the early morning, afternoon, or late in the evening) will unavoidably be more difficult for them. This bears emphasis since many celebrations of the Extraordinary Form are fitted around a parish's schedule of Ordinary Form celebrations, and for this reason occur at the least convenient times of day. Since the Extraordinary Form has become well-known for attracting families with young children, this is a consideration of no small importance.

Further to the paper's point about the informality of the nave in the Extraordinary Form, pastors must be sensitive to the need for small children to move around, for example in an area at the back of church, and on occasion for infants to be taken outside by a parent. Abundant devotional art in churches can be of great value in allowing a small child not old enough to engage fully or for prolonged periods in the ceremonies to remain, nevertheless, within the general religious atmosphere of the liturgy, in a manner which would have been as familiar to our Latin predecessors as it remains today for our Eastern brethren. That is to say, it is better for a child to contemplate a devotional statue or icon while Mass is proceeding, than for his or her attention to turn to entirely secular things.

Also noted in the paper is the value of sacred music. There is no need for this music to be specially adapted to the sensitivities of children: small children have no musical prejudices, and will quickly associate traditional sacred styles with the liturgy, so that hearing them will immediately reinforce a reverent atmosphere and aid concentration and devotion. Older children are well able to sing Gregorian Chant Mass Ordinaries, although preparation for this outside Mass is ideal. Children attending weekly Masses with Gregorian Chant, and perhaps classical Sacred Polyphony, will have the chance to develop an ear for sacred music available to few adult Catholics. The provision of well-executed and truly liturgical music at Mass is something which will richly repay the time and effort required, not least in its lasting effect on children.

Finally, the value of the service of the Altar to young boys cannot be underestimated. It is often observed that boys find it particularly difficult to sit still for long periods, but at

the same time they appreciate discipline and ritual. Serving Mass, even if only occasional, gives them an opportunity to learn about the ceremonies and to develop their natural piety, as well as being an important seed-bed for vocations.²³

Appendix B: Fr Bryan Houghton on Children at Mass

From his novel *Mitre and Crook*.²⁴ The main character, a bishop, is speaking of his own childhood, before the liturgical reform.

‘I learnt to say my prayers at my mother’s knee—and I still say the same ones each night. But I learned to pray when I was dragged off to Mass on Sundays. Something was altered with Mummy and Daddy. They did not talk to each other or even look at each other. Mummy usually fiddled with a Rosary. Daddy thumbed intermittently a *Garden of the Soul* which one of my nephews still uses. My eldest sister, Gertrude, who became a Benedictine nun, knelt bolt upright with her eyes usually shut. As I looked around it was the same with all our other relatives and neighbours. What was most unusual was that nobody paid the slightest attention to me. Even if I pulled Mummy’s skirt, she just gently pushed me away. I once tried to climb on Daddy’s back; he lifted me off and put me under the seat. That, too, was strange: although I was in my Sunday best, I was allowed to crawl about the floor provided I did not make a noise. Funny little boy that I was, I realized perfectly well that something was up.

‘Over there at the altar was Father Gray, a stern old man. I used to hide in the lavatory when he came to visit us. He was dressed in brightly coloured clothes and looked like a fat butterfly. Most of the time he said nothing. He was looking the other way and paid as little attention to Mummy and Daddy as they paid to me.

‘I do not think I was a particularly precocious child but I was certainly very young when I tumbled to the fact that all these people were praying without saying prayers, as I did. Children are imitative: I too wanted to pray without saying prayers. I opened up to my sister Gertrude. “Just sit quite still, like a good boy,” she said. “You are too small to kneel. Keep your hands still as well, on your thighs. Try not to look round and keep your eyes shut if you can. Then just say ‘Jesus’ under your breath, slowly but constantly. I’ll prod you when you say ‘Thou art my Lord and my God’ and you can say it with me.”

‘That, *mutatis mutandis*, is I suppose how we all learned to pray. The point I am getting at is that the Mass itself was our school of prayer. It was there that we learned to be self-effacing, detached, recollected and to adhere to the Divine Presence. It was also at Mass that the simple faithful practise prayer throughout their lives. They may have known little theology but they prayed as theologians often do not. Moreover, the simplest of them attained to heights of prayer and sanctity far beyond me.’

²³ Pope Pius XII Encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) 200: ‘If these youths [sc. altar servers], under the watchful guidance of the priests, are properly trained and encouraged to fulfill the task committed to them punctually, reverently and constantly, then from their number will readily come fresh candidates for the priesthood.’ (‘Quosdi opportune hi iuvenes excolantur, ac vigilanti sacerdotum cura ad creditum sibi ministerium statutis horis reverenter constanterque obeundum excitentur, tum facile eveniet ut novi ex iisdem sacerdotii candidate oriantur;’) This point has been reiterated by the Congregation for Divine Worship when ruling on the question of females serving at Mass in the Ordinary Form (see *Notitiae* 30 (1994) 333-335, and *Notitiae* 37 (2001) 397-399). On this topic see *Positio 1: The Service of the Altar by Men and Boys at the Extraordinary Form*, 3 and Appendix.

²⁴ Fr Bryan Houghton *Mitre and Crook* (Harrison NY: Roman Catholic Books, 1979), pp168-9