



Pope Benedict XVI and the Liturgy

Anselm J. Gribbin

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A prominent and inescapable feature of Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate is the importance which has been given to the sacred liturgy, in its actual celebration, as well as in the pope's Magisterium and theological writings. Not only have we witnessed the reappearance of many elements used in older, but recently-abandoned papal liturgies, but also what amounts to be the virtual liberation of the 'Old Latin Mass'. This has come as a great surprise to many people in the Church, some of whom almost regard it, and the pope's liturgical theology, as a betrayal of recent liturgical reforms. On the other hand, others have viewed these liturgical changes, and the emphasis which Pope Benedict places upon the liturgy in the life of the Church, as positive developments, leading to a more correct understanding of the Second Vatican Council within 'the hermeneutic of continuity' and reform, and the notion of 'organic development'. But, in the midst of conflicting interpretations, how are we to understand these developments and Pope Benedict XVI's re-affirmation of what we now call the *usus antiquior*? In this book Dr Anselm J. Gribbin explores these and other related questions by examining the liturgical theology of Pope Benedict XVI in his magisterial teachings and writings, particularly in the post-synodal exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*, and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Gribbin, in an extensive, and detailed analysis, indicates that the liturgical theology of Pope Benedict XVI/Joseph Ratzinger points the way forward for the Church in the field of liturgy. He also addresses the fundamentally important question of the relationship between the liturgical writings of Pope Benedict XVI as a theologian, and his Magisterium as the supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church, and that the latter is best understood with recourse to the former.

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