



# The Loss of Liturgical Riches in the Sanctoral Cycle

by Peter A. Kwasniewski

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux

**O**ne year, a friend and I had the blessing of attending two celebrations of the Feast of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, for in the old calendar her feast is October 3rd, and in the new calendar, October 1st. In fact, neither date is apropos. Thérèse actually died on September 30th, but this has long been the feast of Saint Jerome, *qui non movetur*, while October 1st, which might be styled the first day of her eternal reward, had been occupied by Saint Remigius, Bishop and Confessor, the one responsible for baptizing King Clovis, thereby bringing the Frankish kingdom into the bosom of Holy Mother Church. This latter feast—so relevant in our days when the “eldest daughter of the Church” has become, sad to say, a silly strumpet for whose conversion the whole Church should be offering up prayers and penances—was removed from the universal calendar in the 1969 reform. I shall have more to say later about the removal of “obscure” or “local” saints. Meanwhile, to come back to the Little Flower, it was hard not to feel blessed by the opportunity to celebrate her memory twice. Surely, the saint of heroic humility would be smiling at the inopportuneness of both dates.

Still, in the Novus Ordo celebration (which was, I might add, just about as Oratorian as could be, complete with a schola singing the chant), it was hard not to notice how absolutely unsuitable the readings were; they were simply the “readings for the day.” The reading from Baruch had to do with the wickedness of the cities who reject God; the reading from the Gospel was “Woe to you, Tyre and Sidon.” Admitting that a preacher with Origen’s exegetical ingenuity could make any Scripture passage illustrate any mystery he pleased, the ordinary layman is left asking: Does this really have much to do with Thérèse? In the old rite, the read-

ings *always* linked up with the saint whose feast was being celebrated. In the *other* Mass I attended, the Epistle was Isaiah 66:12–14 (“As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you”), and the Gospel was Matthew 18:1–4 (“Amen I say to you, unless you convert and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven”). The abandonment of the inner unity of Scripture and feastday is one of the greatest disasters of the new rite. It makes the prayers, the readings, and the sacrifice seem like three different things, when they ought to be clearly woven together, as in the old rite, making one seamless garment.

But there was something more, and worse: the proper chants for her feastday, in the new *Graduale Romanum*, are, in some cases (like the Alleluia verse) irrelevant, and in other cases barely relevant—that is, bearing no special relation to Saint Thérèse. A comparison with the propers of the old rite for Thérèse’s feastday will make apparent the magnitude of the loss suffered by the faithful when the ancient liturgy and its organic development were cast aside.

The *Graduale Romanum* (the Novus Ordo) offers the following propers for Saint Thérèse:

**Introit** (Ps. 30:7-8, 2) — I however have hoped in the Lord: I shall exult and rejoice in Thy mercy, because Thou hast looked upon my humility. V: In Thee, O Lord, I have put my hope, I shall not be confounded for ever; in Thy justice free me. I however have hoped in the Lord: I shall exult and rejoice in Thy mercy, because Thou hast looked upon my humility.

**Gradual** (Ps. 26:4) — One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord. V: That I may see the delight of the Lord, and be protected by His holy temple.

**Alleluia** (Ps. 116:1) — Praise the Lord, all ye nations, and rejoice in Him, all ye peoples. Alleluia.

**Offertory** (Ps. 102:2,5) — Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all of His gifts: and thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s.

**Communion** (Ps. 9:2,3) — I shall tell of all Thy wonders: I shall rejoice and exult in Thee: I shall sing Thy name, O most High.<sup>1</sup>

It goes without saying that the translations given above are not, in fact, the ones given in the ICEL text that still, after all these years, perpetrates on English-speaking Catholics a fraud the magnitude of which has never been equaled in the history of liturgical abuses. The faithful are deprived even of the benefit that would accrue to them from having in

their ears the actual texts that the Church has chosen for her celebrations. Besides, probably fewer than 10 percent of the faithful today actually *hear* these (or any) “Propers,” least of all in the resplendent clothing of Gregorian chant. Instead, they might sing lame songs that are even less relevant to the feastday being celebrated. In other words, the “reform” has resulted, in most instances, in a wholesale abandonment *in practice* of the very notion of Propers.

No, my complaint is not at this level; it is at the level of the Latin text. In her masterful studies of recent years, Dr. Lauren Pristas has helped us to see that the radical difference between the old and new Missals has to be assessed on the “pure” ground of the Latin *editio typica* of each. And this is where I, too, stake my claims. I prescind entirely from the insulting travesty of the ICEL translation and focus on the Latin.

Now, consider the Propers appointed in the old rite for the feast of Saint Thérèse. In stark contrast to the sad situation that obtains with the new rite, in the old rite the Propers were *always* recited or sung, because they are, and were treated as, an integral part of the liturgy. Moreover, people often had their handheld missals with them, so that everyone who cared to pay attention—and this was certainly an ever-growing number right up to the eve of the Council—was nourished by these verses from Scripture, beautifully applied to the Little Flower:

**Introit** (Cant. 4:8-9) — Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come; thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart. V. (Ps. 112:1) Praise the Lord, ye children; praise ye the name of the Lord. Glory be. Come from Libanus, my spouse, etc.

**Gradual** (Mt. 11:25) — I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. V. (Ps. 70:5) [Thou hast been] my hope, O Lord, from my youth.

**Alleluia** (Ecclus. 39:17-19) — Bud forth as the rose planted by the brooks of waters: Give ye a sweet odor as frankincense. Send forth flowers as the lily, and yield a smell, and bring forth leaves in grace, and praise with canticles and bless the Lord in His works. Alleluia.

**Offertory** (Lk. 1:46,48-49) — My soul doth magnify the

Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior: because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid. He that is mighty hath done great things to me.

**Communion** (Deut. 32:10,12) — He led her about and taught her, and He kept her as the apple of His eye. As an eagle He has spread His wings and hath taken her on His shoulder. The Lord alone was her leader.

Comparing the two sets of propers, I ask: Is this an example of liturgical progress, of a “successful” reform? The Novus Ordo propers are vague and generic, ready for application to any female saint; the Tridentine propers are majestic, poetic, and exactly apropos to the Little Flower.

### The Loss of Liturgically Suitable Readings

Let us turn to the subject of readings and how they are to be selected. A first principle for lovers of liturgical tradition is that the cycle of feasts of our Lord, our Lady, and the saints must take precedence over a cycle of Scripture readings. There is no liturgy in existence that privileges a rationalistically-conceived march through books of the Old and New Testaments. All liturgies, Eastern and Western,

look to the mysteries of Christ and of His Mother, and to the lives and virtues of that bright “cloud of witnesses” who incarnate, so to speak, the reality of Jesus again and again throughout history. Recitation of the text of Scripture is made decisively subordinate to the historical embodiment of Scripture’s message in holy persons. The readings serve, in other words, to frame, adorn, and bring to light the face of Christ and the faces of all His imitators. The use of Scripture is iconic, not homiletic. We are not being lectured at, but rather summoned to worship, to bow down before mysteries. The readings are to function as verbal incense,

not verbose information. That is why a relatively narrow selection of Scripture passages, and usually shorter rather than longer ones, is perfectly adequate and even preferable for the sacred liturgy. Not all passages are equally suited to the purpose of liturgy *per se*. With all due respect to the inspired word of God, probably only about 10 percent of the Bible is *liturgically* suitable. The other 90 percent is fertile ground for *lectio divina*, the practice that all of us should be engaged upon in some of the hours when we’re *not* at Mass.

With these all too brief considerations in mind, we can see the fallacy lurking behind one of the most com-

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mon complaints the liturgical movement made against the Tridentine Missal, namely that it did not contain a sufficient diversity of Scripture readings. Apart from the general refutation of the argument—namely, that liturgy is not meant to be a Scripture study session, that Scripture serves an important but still *subordinate* role in the Holy Sacrifice—the real solution would have been to undertake with great patience the long-term task of composing Masses more “proper” to individual saints or liturgical seasons, so that a carefully augmented use of Scripture would have been able to retain the iconic function that we glimpsed in the propers of Saint Thérèse. I do not necessarily mean composing new chants, although in some cases this would certainly have been possible, but selecting chants more directly relevant to the life and teaching of the particular saint, and expanding the readings by appointing previously unread passages for the feastdays of saints whom they suit the most.<sup>2</sup>

For example, the feast of Saint John on December 27 might have been enhanced by the use of a different entrance antiphon than *In medio ecclesiae*. As beautiful an introit as this is, it was used indiscriminately for all the Doctors of the Church, whose numbers have greatly increased in recent centuries, with no attempt made to craft propers for them.<sup>3</sup> A properly Johannine introit would refer, using verses from his Gospel, to the sublimity of his teaching on the divinity of Christ. In general, the feasts of the Evangelists could have been improved simply by making the propers more, if you will, “proper.” Or again, why must every holy woman get the *mulier fortis* reading from Proverbs? It seems odd to apply the selfsame reading to very distinctive saints for whom one could find other more appropriate passages. *This* would have been the way to expand the liturgy’s readings while respecting the intrinsic connection between scripture and sanctity. As long as you preserve the *mulier fortis* for, say, three women (rather than for twelve or however many!), daily Mass-goers will still hear or read this fine reading every year, but there will not be overkill on the one hand, and undervaluation of the distinctiveness of the saints on the other. The pattern had already been set by the feasts of those saints who, in the Missal of 1955 or 1962, already had a perfectly adapted set of propers special to them: for example, Saint Thérèse herself, where all the chants and readings are exquisitely suitable, or Saint Margaret Mary in her special relationship with the Sacred Heart. Yes, to do this would have made the Missal somewhat larger or demanded its publication in two volumes, but it would have

greatly enriched it, and one of the arguably legitimate goals of the liturgical movement—that Scripture be more fully represented—would have been satisfied in a manner wholly consistent with the tradition and its best models.

The new lectionary, in contrast, is a failure, for three fundamental reasons.

First, the guiding principles were Cartesian, that is to say, mathematical order, a technical completeness (we have to “get through” the Scriptures), and a typically materialistic disregard for the organic unity of the soul-body complex which is the liturgy—its soul being the Eucharistic sacrifice-sacrament, the dual motion of *offering* to the Father and *receiving* in communion, while its body is the surrounding prayers, readings, and chants.

Second, there is the basic human problem of having more than one year’s worth of readings. A single year is a natural period of time; it is healthy, pedagogically superior, and deeply consoling to come back, year after year, to the same readings for a given Sunday or weekday. This has been my experience. You get to know the Sunday readings especially; they become bone of your bone. You start to think of Sundays in terms of their readings, chants, and prayers, which stick in the mind all the more firmly because they are both spoken or chanted and read in the missal you are holding

(more senses engaged). In this way the traditional Western liturgy shows its affinity to the Eastern liturgies, which go so far as to name Sundays after their Gospels or after some particular dogma emphasized. In the old days, the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost had a distinctive identity: *Protector noster*; was the introit, you knew its melody, and the whole Mass grew to be familiar, like a much-loved garden or a trail through the woods. Nowadays, who knows what the “tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time” is about! It’s anyone’s guess.

Third, the men who chose the readings were a committee of “experts,” biblical scholars with sociological leanings, who should be distrusted when it comes to spiritual matters. The only reverent way of augmenting a missal would be to entrust to *contemplative monks* the task of proposing new readings and propers for certain saints’ feasts, for the weekdays of Advent, and so on—to entrust it to traditional Benedictines, Cistercians, Carthusians, whose daily bread (after the Eucharist) is *lectio divina*, whose every thought is permeated by the words, the rhythms, the doctrine of Sacred Scripture. For these men and women, Scripture is not a “project,” a book to be divided and conquered; it is

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their food and drink. Feeling the spiritual weight of what they read, they would be able to recommend readings that are most *fitting* for a given saint, or for the ferial days in Advent and Paschaltide. So the process could have gone like this: monks at many monasteries propose, after much prayer and meditation, new readings for feastdays or ferials in the old calendar; then, final decisions are rendered by a board composed of monks, bishops, and experienced preachers, but not “scholars” and “liturgists.”

What are some areas of the old calendar where new readings could be appointed without undermining the spirit, the unity, the internal pedagogy, and the traditional perfection of the liturgy as a whole?

*Weekdays during Advent.* The Roman church in the early ages adopted the practice of daily Mass during Lent at a time when daily Mass was unusual and when the Eastern churches adopted precisely the opposite custom, having prayer services instead of Mass for weekdays in Lent. With the increasing modern emphasis on assisting at daily Mass, and the constant though lesser theme of Advent as a time of penance, comes the need to enrich this segment of the calendar. Here, then, is a beautiful open field for the assigning of Advent lessons from the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Wisdom books, and new graduals from the Psalms, all of them pointing as with one voice to the coming feast of Christmas and testifying to the mystery of the Incarnation. The saints’ feastdays during Advent should not, however, be interfered with; only the “empty” days should have readings assigned to them. If the Church decided to add a new saint’s day to the universal calendar, the readings could be adjusted accordingly.

*Weekdays during Paschal time.* Again, not to the prejudice of the saints, new readings could be used for the ferial days of this season.

In general, many of the saints’ feastdays could be furnished with apposite readings, in the way that Saint Monica’s feast has the Gospel about the widow’s son raised from the dead, or Saint Gregory Thaumaturgas, a saint famous for having literally moved a mountain, has the Gospel about the moving of mountains by men of faith.

### Suppressing “Archaic” Saints

I would like to turn to a related theme: the suppression in the new Missal of so many saints’ days, and their partial replacement with “new” saints supposedly more “relevant” to our times and to modern Catholics. The fact is, there are thousands of saints; John Paul II canonized hundreds more.

There could never be room in the calendar for even the modern saints (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), let alone a representative sampling from all centuries. The whole problem with the reformers’ mentality is that they felt that the calendar has to reflect in almost mathematical proportions, by a quantitative sampling, the various periods of Church history, with weight being given to the modern because it is nearer to us. The “reform” betrays a false notion of sacred time. We

are the *contemporaries* of Christ, the Apostles, and the early Christians who died in agony for sake of the Faith, and yet we are most likely to forget about them and to need their prayers and their example ever before us. The early Christians are the perennial witnesses to the Faith, the first great standardbearers after its sudden appearance in the fallen world. There is something especially glorious about them, and that is why the old calendar is filled with their names. We are ever being led back to the first ages, the infancy of our faith, the childhood of our religion.

The calendar’s main purpose is not to keep up with the ongoing march of saints; there are devotional books, prayer manuals, biographies, and much more to help us deepen our knowledge of that vast assembly. No, the saints whom the Holy Spirit moved the Church to include in the universal calendar are there for special reasons which cannot be grasped by a sociological or historical analysis; the reasons are intuited by one who prays long and faithfully with the old missal. The very appearance of randomness, of an unlikely gathering of some few more recent saints with the much larger number of saints from the earliest times, gives pause for reflection: Am I numbering myself with the ancients, the wise men, the first martyrs? Am I remembering my forefathers, who would otherwise pass out of human memory? The continual recollection of the earliest saints corrects our modern habit—a habit that all “moderns” have in their own period, regardless of whether we are speaking of the Renaissance or the 21<sup>st</sup> century—of thinking that the new is more real, and the old is a distant shadow no longer distinct and discernible. No, the missal brings us immediately into the company of the Romans and Greeks and barbarians who converted to the Faith, who were great bishops or virgins or martyrs, and who bring us outside of our age into the agelessness of the faith, its eternal youth that sings the praises and begs the intercession of these ancient men and women just as though they were sitting next to us in the pew. It ever joins the end to the beginning, and keeps today rooted in the first day; it brings into sharp relief the awesome fact that the Christian religion



*The Virgin with Six Saints* by Tielepo

is ever-present and transhistorical, there is neither yesterday, nor today, nor tomorrow, but Christ is always and forever—more coming to us in the manger and dying for us on the Cross, and his saints, even those whom our human instincts would place at a distance, are not dead strangers but living friends. The old calendar does all this with a remarkable subtlety of force: it works at you day by day, quietly, until you begin to recognize those names, and remember the collects, and spontaneously turn to the men and women who bore the names, who are now not only your models but your contemporaries. Clock time loses its hegemony, and sacral time, which participates in the changeless now of God, gains on your soul. *That* is the kind of calendar we need.

One who is attentive to the old liturgical calendar will perceive many instances of the subtle unity and harmony that pervades this noble work of the Holy Spirit, in which many great souls participated but, thanks be to God, no committee had a part. Note, as a palpable but by no means isolated example, the magnificent progression of feasts from September 14<sup>th</sup> to September 18<sup>th</sup>, which form a miniature catechesis of the mystery of the passion and death of our Lord and its saving power throughout all ages—beginning with Mary and John at the foot of the cross, and continuing in all the heroic imitators of Christ whom divine grace raises up when the faith has begun to grow cold. (I do not reproduce here the texts in full, but merely sketch out each day, to show how well they cohere.)

**September 14: The Exaltation of the Holy Cross.** *Introit:* cf.

Gal. 6:14: It behooves us to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is our salvation, life, and resurrection, by whom we are saved and delivered. *Collect:* O God, who on this day dost gladden us by the yearly Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross: grant, we beseech Thee, that we who on earth acknowledge the mystery of redemption wrought upon it, may be found worthy to enjoy the rewards of that same redemption in heaven. Through the same Our Lord Jesus Christ... *Epistle:* Phil. 2:5-11: Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus... *Gospel:* Jn. 12:31-36: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself... While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light.



*Finding the True Cross by Gaddi*

**September 15: The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary.**

*Introit:* Jn. 19:25: There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister Mary of Cleophas, and

Salome, and Mary Magdalen. Woman, behold thy son, said Jesus: and to the disciple, Behold thy Mother. *Collect:* O God, at whose Passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow pieced the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary, mercifully grant that we who honor with devotion her sorrows, may obtain the happy fruit of Thy Passion: who livest and reignest with God the Father ... *Epistle:* Jud. 13:22, 23-25: The Lord hath blessed thee by his power, who by thee hath brought our enemies to nought. ... for thou hast not spared thy life by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people, but hast prevented our ruin in the presence of our God. *Gospel:* Jn. 19:25-27.

**September 16: Saints Cornelius and Cyprian, Martyrs.**

*Introit:* Ps. 78:11,12,10: Let the sighing of the prisoners come in before thee, O Lord; render to our neighbors sevenfold in their bosom; revenge the blood of thy saints, which hath been shed. *Epistle:* Wis. 3:1-8: The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. ... As gold in the furnace he hath proved them, and as a victim of a holocaust he hath received them ... *Gospel:* Lk. 2:9-19: They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, dragging you before kings and governors, for my name's sake. ... In your patience you shall possess your souls.

**September 17: Impression of the Holy Stigmata on the Body of Saint Francis.** *Introit:* Gal. 6:14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. *Collect:* O Lord Jesus Christ, who when the world was growing cold, in order to enkindle in our hearts the fire of thy love, didst renew the sacred marks of thy passion on the body of blessed Francis: mercifully grant that with the aid of his merits and prayers we may ever bear our cross, and bring forth worthy fruits of penance: who livest and reignest with God the Father ... *Epistle:* Gal. 6:14-18: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ... From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. *Gospel:* Mt. 16:24-27: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For he that will save his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. *Postcommunion:* O God, who in diverse ways didst show forth in blessed Francis thy confessor the wondrous mysteries of thy cross, grant, we beseech thee, that ever following the example of his devotion, we may be strengthened by constant meditation on that same cross. Through our Lord Jesus Christ...

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**September 18: Saint Joseph of Cupertino, Confessor.**

*Introit:* Eccl. 1:14-15: The love of God is honorable wisdom,

and they to whom she shall show herself, love her by the sight, and by the knowledge of her great works. *Collect*: O God, who hast ordained that thine only-begotten Son when lifted up from the earth should draw all things to Himself, mercifully grant, through the merits and example of thy seraphic confessor Joseph, that we may be lifted up above all earthly desires and be found worthy to come unto Him, who liveth and reigneth with God the Father ...<sup>4</sup> *Epistle*: 1 Cor. 13:1-13: If I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I should have faith so that I could move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. ... *Gospel*: Mt. 22:1-14: Many are called, but few are chosen.

This sequence of profoundly coordinated and mutually reinforcing prayers, readings, and propers is only one example among many of the quiet working of the Holy Spirit on the calendar over the centuries, perfecting the liturgical expression of the mysteries of faith and intensifying its pedagogical power on receptive souls. I recall how a highly perceptive priest who celebrated the Tridentine Mass every morning told me that such treasures of beauty and order could be found throughout the calendar. We should not be surprised; we should even have expected that a liturgy that had grown organically for centuries would exhibit refinements of this degree.

### Preserve, Study, and Pray

What, then, is the conclusion we can derive from the foregoing observations? First, there is the obvious truth that we must preserve, with all our might, the riches of the Latin liturgical heritage for future generations who deserve to know what the Western liturgy really is, and who long to worship God in spirit and truth according to His gifts to the Church. The words of John Paul II in *Ecclesia Dei*, now almost twenty years old, ring out with a relevance ever-new: “respect must everywhere be shown for the feelings of all those who are attached to the Latin liturgical tradition.” Could anyone with mind aware and heart aflame fail to be attached to so rich a tradition, and disturbed by so impoverished a revision? The recently promulgated *Summorum Pontificum* beyond all expectation, transforms the late pope’s counsel into a veritable law for the Latin Church, down to each and every parish, and in this way gives the reigning pope’s official sanction to the apostolate of a living and life-giving preservation of our inheritance.

Second, and less obviously, we need to take the time and make the effort to *study* the traditional liturgy to the extent

that our state in life permits, so that we can peacefully, intelligently, and persuasively defend its superiority, and help those who are unfamiliar with it to see the vital spiritual lessons, the poetic beauty, the catechetical instruction, the consolation of soul it plentifully affords.

Finally, and least obviously, we need to support with prayers and good will the many priests and laity who are doing their utmost to bring the celebration of the Novus Ordo into conformity with the Latin liturgical tradition, however much this may seem to be a quest to square the circle. Ultimately, for the very survival of orthodox Catholicism, there has to be a return to the ancient heritage that has been spurned, yet this can happen in a pure way and in a piecemeal way. The readers of this journal strive to follow a purer way, but they must not scorn the piecemeal (or *Adoremus*) way, for it, too,

is capable of leading souls in the right direction. It is not for us to judge how the victory will be won. Our task is only to promote the good we know. May Saint Thérèse—and all the saints nourished on the Tridentine rite—pray for us. ✠

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### Notes

1. Of course, the very fact that the altar missal can have still other texts than those given in the *Graduale Romanum*, and ones not especially better than the selection made by Solesmes, underlines the lack of coordination and unity which has effectively made it impossible to say the Roman rite is unified and universal. Put simply: When I walk into a church anywhere in the world, I do not know what I am going to get, regardless of the so-called universal calendar—there are so many options, dispensations, derogations, cycles, and what have you. This is a deplorable situation.
2. Every five years, a supplement could have been published, to be used alongside the missal on those particular feastdays, until after twenty years or so it was time to put all the new propers/readings into the missal itself. One sees in old missals how certain universal or regional feasts were introduced by appendices pasted into the back of the books.
3. Note that I am not advocating liturgical experimentation, but only the augmentation of a Missal otherwise left intact in its beauty and riches. This is exactly what the Church herself did for a century and more prior to Vatican II: new feasts were introduced, often with new propers, with relevant readings appointed, and even new chants composed. It could only be snobbishness or squeamishness that would prevent us from seeing the wisdom of this kind of truly organic development. Who could not imagine a suitable Mass in honor of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, drawing from the sayings of the prophets (such as Amos) and of our Lord on the poor (the episode of the rich young man comes to mind)?
4. Let the reader be reminded that Saint Joseph of Cupertino was especially famous for his much-witnessed levitations that literally “lifted him high” above the ground, even to the very rooftops. So, the Collect is using the saint’s “levity” as a symbol of how we, too, must rise above merely earthly goods and cleave to those of heaven. It is a splendid example of multiple layers of meaning deliberately planted in a text, which presupposes an audience awake and intelligent enough to parse out the meaning.



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