

Coming Liturgical Change

This coming Sunday, Septuagesima Sunday, at midnight (the start of Sunday) the Christmas Section or Cycle of the year ends and the Easter Section begins. The liturgical colour for Sundays and ferias will henceforth become violet for the first Season in this Section; namely, Pre-lententide, which is also called the Season of Septuagesima. It remains violet for all of Lententide (Lententide embraces Lent and its Seasonal Sundays).

The colour becomes a sombre violet, and violet or blue flowers should adorn the Altar but only in small numbers. At Mass, the *Gloria* is omitted on Sundays and ferial days of this Season, but the Glory in the Introit and the one at the end of the Lavabo are retained. On Sundays, the Alleluia Verse is replaced by a Tract; however, on ferial days, it is simply omitted and is not replaced by any other prayer. From Sunday forward, the organ may still play solo at Mass but all other instruments are banned. Come Lent, the organ may only intone chant.

In the Divine Office, the Alleluia at the opening of each *hora* is replaced by the prayer *Praise be to Thee, O Lord, King of everlasting glory*. The *Te Deum* is omitted at Matins. These features are also present at the various Little Offices.

For those who pray only one chaplet of the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary on Sunday, the Sorrowful Mysteries are preferred for this Season. Other popular devotions for Pre-lententide include the Office of the Sacred Passion, the Office of the Holy Cross, the Stations of the Cross and Psalter and Chaplet of the Five Sacred Wounds of Christ, and, especially, the Holy Face devotions. The Feast of the Holy Face, observed on some local and proper calendars, is celebrated on the last day of this Season, Shrove Tuesday. Holy Face devotions should be prayed throughout this short season, especially on Tuesdays. Devotion to the Holy Face is directed to four ends: the extirpation of the sin of communism, combat against blasphemy, and opposition to profanation of the Holy Name and the Holy Day.

The Season of Septuagesima culminates in a triduum known as Shrovetide. This consists of Shrove Sunday (Quinquagesima), Shrove Monday and Shrove Tuesday. The last of these days is also called Mardi Gras or Pancake Tuesday because a last treat is taken on that day before

the rigours of Lent obtain. It is traditional to repair to the confessional during Shrovetide, all in preparation for Lent.

Pre-lententide is also a period of voluntary fasting and abstinence. It would be appropriate to observe lighter fasts on weekdays of this Season, and to abstain and mortify for special cause in preparation for Lent. For this Pre-lententide, we suggest fasting in favour of unity in truth in Holy Church. Dogma and praxis must complement each other to be Catholic: there can be no opposition between them.

Pre-lententide was removed from the New Rite in 1970. This change was one of many revolutionary acts that characterise the New Liturgy. We note that Septuagesima is ancient, although it once opened a longer Lententide. It had to be longer at one time because fasting on Thursdays and Saturdays was forbidden. So Lent was, at one time, forty discontinuous days of fasting on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the Season. Hence it began earlier than it does in our day. The development of a Pre-lententide is an excellent example of organic change as inspired by God the Holy Ghost and implemented in the wisdom of the fathers. Good Catholics respect God's will in organic change: they do not concoct liturgy in committee, inspired by their own fancy or their prideful pet theories. As Jesus said at the Ascension: Fear not My departure to the right hand of My Father, for My Father and I will send unto you Our Spirit, and He will teach you all things.

This year, the last day before Septuagesima happens to be a ferial Saturday of Post-Epiphany, so it is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, our Mother: it is Our Lady's Saturday. It is apt that the Christmas Section begin with our Lady and end with her: she surrounds Christ in liturgical time just as she envelopes Him in her sacred womb. This is also why the Holy Name of Jesus in the *Ave* is preceded and followed by the name of our Lady, St. Mary.