

Low Mass, Sung Mass, High Mass, Solemn Mass

We've all heard the terms, and can easily distinguish a High Mass from a Low Mass. But do you know the difference between a Sung Mass, High Mass and Solemn Mass?

When the question was put before our pastor Fr. Van Vliet, he quipped: "A High Mass is distinguished from a Solemn High Mass, and both are actually Sung Masses, although the Sung Mass usually refers to a High Mass." You got that, right?

At a Solemn High Mass, the priest is assisted at the altar by a deacon and subdeacon. The priest sings much of the Mass, but the deacon and subdeacon sing some parts, particularly the Gospel and Epistle, respectively. In a High Mass, the priest does not have a deacon and subdeacon assisting him. He therefore sings all the parts of the Mass that are sung at a Solemn Mass. The High Mass is the most common Sung Mass in a parish.

There is usually only one High Mass each day in a church, and it would normally be the one most attended by the faithful. It can be, but is not necessarily, the last Mass of the day. Every High Mass is supposed to have incense, but it may be excluded for a serious reason, such as the priest is allergic to the smoke or there is insufficient time allowed for the Mass.

In a Sung Mass (High or Solemn), certain parts of the Mass must be sung, at least *recto tono*; otherwise, it would not be a Sung Mass. From the prayers at the foot of the altar to the Last Gospel, all hymns sung by the choir or faithful are to be in Latin. A vernacular hymn is allowed during the procession in and recession out, but during the Mass proper, Latin is the sole language.

All other Masses during the day are normally Low Masses. Vernacular hymns are allowed during Low Masses.

Got it? Good!



High Mass, FLC, Easter 2013



Solemn Mass, Annunciation Church, June 12, 2013