

My feelings are mixed regarding the liturgical reforms that accompanied Vatican II. The most unfortunate part of taking away the pre-Vatican II rite was the haste with which it was done. Some communities in this country had been catechized for years in preparation for the new rite, but most were thrown into the reform with little or no warning. The catechesis that accompanied the post-conciliar renewal was often a matter of intellectual learning over against catechesis that would form not only minds but the bodily, imaginative, affective facets of the person as well. The intellectual approach to liturgical renewal filtered down into my own millennial generation through my Catholic parents, and through them (and their lay and clerical peers) to me. The liturgy I experienced growing up was more or less incomprehensible. I went because I had to, not because it captured my religious imagination! If liturgy is going to be incomprehensible anyway, why not do it in a foreign language with all the smells and bells we can muster? Then again, if we surrounded our current rite with the sort of care, preparation, and liturgical catechesis that elicits a vivid liturgical imagination, what appeal would the old rite hold?