

Stephanie Budwey, Age 29, on Liturgical Reform

[Editor's note: there's a lot of buzz around what young people think of liturgical reform, and not a little bit of generalizing. I thought it would be interesting to ask half a dozen or so young people what they think. Not meant as a set-up: the only directions from me were, what do YOU think? We continue with Stephanie Budwey, who is here in Milwaukee at NAAL.]

My name is Stephanie Budwey. I am 29 years old and I am a doctoral student in liturgy and church music. I grew up in a very traditional Roman Catholic parish (read: I did not know what “On Eagle’s Wings” was until I left for college). I worked as a church musician in Roman Catholic parishes for ten years before I left the church, both personally and professionally. I now work in an Episcopal Church and I was recently received as an Episcopalian.

I think that Vatican II was necessary to help correct numerous problems in the liturgy that were brought to the forefront by those involved in the liturgical movement. While many good things came out of the liturgical reforms and implementation of Vatican II, I think that in the United States the reforms might have been implemented in a slightly better way (it seems as there was a period after Vatican II when the motto might have been “anything goes,” and perhaps the creation of a U.S. hymnal approved by the bishops might have helped this situation). Throughout the history of the Roman Catholic Church I see a pendulum swing moving back and forth from left to right. I believe that because the pendulum moved so quickly after Vatican II we are now experiencing a backlash. As an Episcopalian, I would advocate for a “via media” in issues musical and liturgical.

As a musician, I can appreciate the beauty of Gregorian chant and much of the music associated with the pre-Vatican II rite of the Mass. It seems to me that many people who are drawn to the pre-Vatican II rite of the Mass have a sort of “false nostalgia” associated with it (one only needs to read Bernard Botte’s description of a pre-Vatican II Mass in *From Silence to Participation* to understand this). I also see many issues associated with the pre-Vatican II rite that have nothing to do with liturgy or music. Part of the reason I became an Episcopalian is because I wanted to be in a church where I could experience sound liturgy and music but also see the connection being made between liturgy and social justice (as Virgil Michael did). I feel that many people who advocate the pre-Vatican II Mass do not make this connection and are extremely conservative, often to the point of being un-Christian. What kind of liturgy is that?