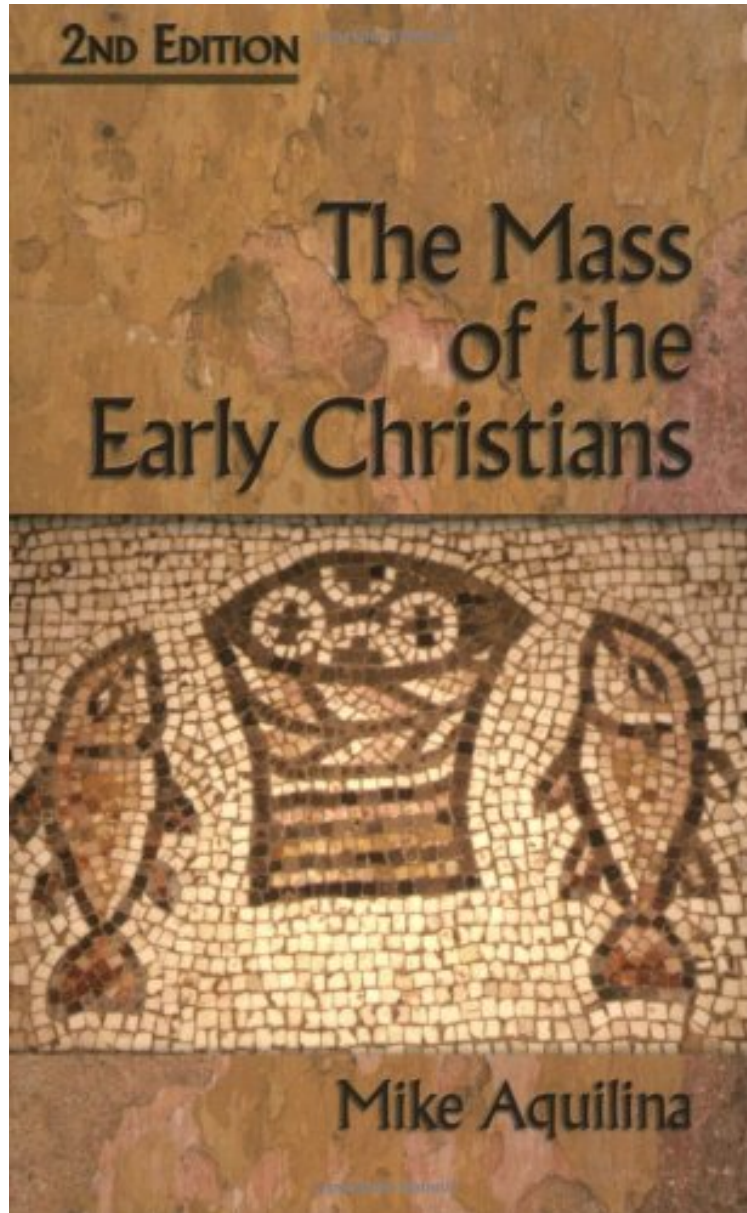


The Mass of the Early Christians

Mike Aquilina

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Mike Aquilina : The Mass of the Early Christians before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mass of the Early Christians:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful primer on what the early Church had to say about the Mass.By ARGA wonderful primer on what the early Church had to say about the Mass. It is beautiful to read words

that mirror or at least echo what we still use to this day throughout the world at Mass from the mouths of those who lived within a generation or two of Jesus and the Apostles. Amazing to see the preservation of Tradition that the Church Jesus established has accomplished over two thousand years uncorrupted. Mike Aquilina spends most of the book giving a chapter to a different person who lived during the first 300 years or so after Jesus. A summary of the person and what it is we will read in the source material starts the chapter and then actual words written so long ago. Some are early liturgies, other are pagans declaiming what the Christians were up to, others heretics speaking to the practices of the true Church. Beautiful to see as a Catholic the continuity to the times of Jesus that Holy Mother Church has preserved. I imagine this would be quite instructive to any Protestants open to reading about the early Church and seeing them profess the same dogmas of transubstantiation and importance of the Eucharist that the Protestant Reformers dismissed as un-Christian 1500 years after Jesus established such practices. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Great resource on so many levels. By Jeffrey Miller I had been looking forward to reading the 2nd edition of Mike Aquilina's *The Mass of the Early Christians* and I certainly was not disappointed. This is absolutely a great book and I believe required reading for anybody who wants to read on the early form and development of the Mass. Mike Aquilina takes us sequentially through history using documented sources to give us a good idea of how the Mass was originally celebrated. We of course have some idea of this from the New Testament and the book goes thoroughly through both Old and New Testament sources in reference to the Mass and we see over and over again how the Church Fathers did the same. Part of the development of the Mass is shrouded in history, especially concerning the Eucharistic celebration. Early Christians kept the Eucharistic celebration secret and seekers and catechumens were required to leave prior to the Eucharistic celebration. Early writers pretty much kept to this tradition and so often we only have oblique references to this and it only becomes more explicit after the Edict of Milan. I think this practice is a good thing to meditate on in how sacred the early Christians viewed this celebration and how cavalier we can think of it. Despite this lack of openness regarding the liturgy there are still a lot of good clues to give us an insight into these early celebrations and we of course find that they are not much different in structure compared to our current celebrations. Part II - The Testimony of Witnesses is the largest part of the book and starts with the New Testament, the Didache and then chapters focusing on individuals such as Church Fathers and other historical sources including some Pagan and Gnostic ones. I really like how he laid out the book because instead of getting brief texts from multiple sources we get much fuller texts from these authors when they reference the liturgy. This book is not a listing of all the texts available on the early church, but does contain a prominent sampling of them. As Mike Aquilina mentions including all of them would have made the book twice as large and I think he came up with a great compromise. I much prefer the fuller texts along with full scriptural texts. I found some of the Pagan sources quite fascinating along with some of the early accusations made against the Christians. I had of course heard of the cannibalism charges, but some of the other charges made makes Church reporting by the modern media quite tame in contrast. The best part those are of the Church's witnesses and the insights they had towards the Mass and the view they give us of the early liturgies. This book can be used both for apologetic purposes and for spiritual reading. What I found most fascinating though was the texts from the Mass that still exist and the variety of them from the various geographical liturgies. The last section of the book gives us a short and imaginative look at what it would have been like to go to a Mass in North Africa and a good idea of what it would have been like to go to one of these house Churches during the time the Church was being heavily persecuted. Highly recommended for anybody. 21 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Compelling. By Stratiotes Doxha Theon Through the use of primary sources with minimum interjection of commentary, Mr. Aquilina provides a compelling account of the early mass. It is a challenge to the idea of a primitive and simplistic church model that instead shows us how well-formed the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist were very early in the church. From the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist to the development of church government and use of scripture, this will be a serious challenge for inquisitive non-Catholic believers. Mr. Aquilina does a fine job of letting the early church speak for itself in describing the heart of worship in spirit and truth. This little book is packed and will be a great resource for church historians and theologians of the mass. Very readable yet profound and engaging. The early martyrs asserted that they could not live without the mass. You may find yourself drawn to the same conclusion. Be forewarned, Mr. Aquilina's passion for the early church and the mass is infectious. But you will not be sorry if you catch it. You will also want his other superb work, *The Fathers of the Church*, Expanded Edition.

What did the first Christians believe about the Eucharist? How did they follow Jesus' command, Do this in remembrance of me? How did they celebrate the Lord's Day? What would they recognize in today's Mass? The answers may surprise you. In *The Mass of the Early Christians*, author Mike Aquilina reveals the Church's most ancient Eucharistic beliefs and practices. Using the words of the early Christians themselves -- from many documents and inscriptions -- Aquilina traces the Mass's history from Jesus' lifetime through the fourth century. The Mass stood at the center of the Church's life, evident in the Scriptures as well as the earliest Christian sermons, letters, artwork, tombstones, and architecture. Even the pagans bore witness to the Mass in the records of their persecutions. In these legacies from the early Church, you'll hear and taste and see the same worship Catholics know today: the altar, the

priests, the chalice of wine, the bread, the Sign of the Cross...the Lord, have mercy ...the Holy, holy, holy ...and the Communion. You'll see vividly how Jesus followed through on his promise to be with us always, until the end of time.

All Christians from liturgical traditions can read this book with profit and find comfort in the firm historical basis of their own worship. Those who have shunned liturgical worship might after reading this book reconsider their position and wonder what they have been missing. --Christian Book "The Mass we know on Sunday -- the Mass you encounter in this book --- is where Tradition lives, where the Church's memory reigns 'in the Spirit.'" Read this book, then, and remember." --Scott Hahn, Professor of Scripture and Theology, Franciscan University of Steubenville
About the Author
Vice-president of the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, Mike Aquilina has authored or edited more than a dozen books on Catholic history, doctrine, and devotion, including the best-selling *What Catholics Believe*.