

SANCTUS BELLS

HISTORY AND USE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



MATTHEW D. HERRERA

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Cover photograph of bronze handheld sanctus bells of Old Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa by the author



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INTRODUCTION

Most Catholic Christians (at least the more mature ones) are familiar with sanctus bells.¹ Many wonder about them. Some long to hear their joyful sounds. Still others erroneously believe their use during the Mass is now either no longer needed or prohibited altogether by the Church. This short monograph explores the history (both fact and fiction) and use of sanctus bells in the Catholic Church.

Sanctus bells have been rung as part of the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the Church for over 800 years.² Most sanctus bells used today are small handheld bells or assemblies of three to five bells that may be rung during the Mass as directed in Chapter IV, paragraph #150 of the latest version of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*:

"A little before the consecration, when appropriate, a server rings a bell as a signal to the faithful. According to local custom, the server also rings the bell as the priest shows the host and then the chalice."

The use of sanctus bells during the Mass stems from two distinct origins. First, ringing the bells creates a joyful noise to the Lord³ Second, the bells were rung in times past to signal those not able to attend Mass that something supernatural was taking place.⁴

HISTORY

The use of bells in the Church dates back to the fifth century when St. Paulinus, the Bishop of Nola, introduced them as a means to summon monks to worship. In the seventh century Pope Sabinianus approved the use of bells to call the faithful to the Mass. The Venerable Bede, an English saint of the eighth century, is credited with the introduction of bell ringing at requiem Masses. By the ninth century the use of bells had spread to even the small parish churches of the western Roman Empire.

1. The word "Sanctus" translates to "Holy" in Latin. Sanctus bells derive their name from being rung first during the Extraordinary Form of the Mass. Sanctus bells are also often referred to as: altar bells, Mass bells, Our Father bells, sacring bells, saints' bells, sance-bells, sancte bells, saunce-bells, squilla bells and a host of other names.
2. Herbermann, Charles G. et. al., ed. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. 16 vols. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907.
3. Jungmann, SJ, Rev. Josef A. *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*. 2 vols. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1950.
4. Noonan, Jr., Rev. James-Charles. *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church*. New York: Viking-Penguin Group, 1996.

It wasn't until the thirteenth century that outdoor tower bells (at first they typically chose the largest bell in the belfry, later the smallest bell in the belfry) began to be rung as sanctus bells during the Mass. From a historical standpoint it is interesting to note that tower bells are still used even today as sanctus bells at the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican and a great many other historic churches and cathedrals. A close look at many of these older structures will often reveal a series of sighting holes (and sometimes mirrors) that were once used by bell-ringers to monitor the celebration of the Mass from bell-lofts.

These tower bells were rung at the consecration and presentation of the Eucharist for at least two reasons. First and foremost, the sanctus bells were rung during the Mass to create a joyful noise (often in conjunction with select musical instruments such as the lyre) to the Lord as described in Psalm 98.4:

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!"

This practice of ringing bells to create a joyful noise for the Lord during the Mass⁵ is based to some degree on the use of *tintinnabula* (Latin for tiny bells) or *crotal* bells that were a part of ancient Judaic worship.

5. Conversely to express a sense of the Catholic Church's solemn bereavement during the time of Christ's Passion and Burial, all bells are silenced after being rung during the *Gloria* at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday until the singing of the *Gloria* at the Easter Vigil Mass. Somber wooden clappers or *matracas* are often used in place of bells during this period.

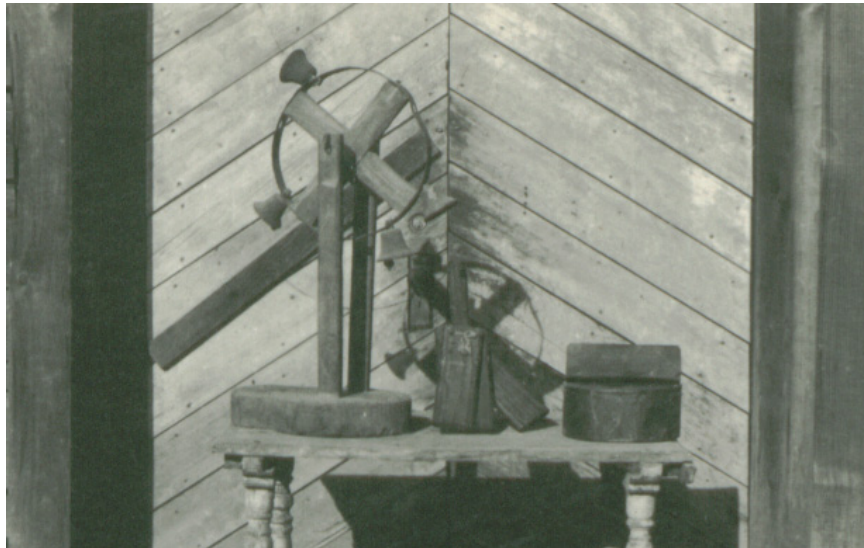


The earliest sanctus bells were typically the largest or smallest outdoor bell of a cathedral or church similar to those of Old Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa.

Ringling the bells also gave notice to those unable to attend the Mass (the sick, slaves, outside guards, etc.) that something divine and miraculous was taking place inside of the church building. The voice of the bell would allow people to stop what they were doing to offer an act of adoration to God. Additionally, the bells provided the ancillary benefit of focusing (or re-focusing) the attention of the faithful inside the church to the miracle that was taking place atop the altar of sacrifice.

With the passage of time there was less of a need to ring the outdoor tower bells as more people were able (or allowed) to attend Mass. Handheld bells, sanctuary-based chimes and sacring rings or "gloria wheels" (commonly used in Spain and during the Mission Period in Alta California) eventually replaced the large towers bells. The smaller bells were easier and more convenient to use and they were more than capable of creating joyful noises for the Lord. The use of the smaller sanctus bells also continued to help focus the faithful's attention on the miracle taking place on the altar. Finally, the use of even the smaller bells upheld the already long held tradition of ringing sanctus bells during the Mass.

Nearly 350 years after the introduction of the sanctus bells to the liturgy, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) formally *mandated* their use during the celebration of the Mass. Thus the use of the bells became a requirement of the official rubrics of the Mass for the first time.



Rare photo taken circa 1900 of sacring ring or "gloria wheel" that was once used at Old Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa during the Mission Period. Rotating this wheel using the hand-crank would simultaneously ring several small bronze bells. This sacring ring is now on display in the Old Mission Museum. Photograph courtesy of the Herrera Family Collection.

The ringing of sanctus bells is still required during the celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Mass (the Latin Tridentine Mass) even today. Conversely the ringing of sanctus bells was made *optional* during the celebration of the Ordinary Form of the Mass which was introduced by Pope Paul VI in 1969.

BELLS IN THE BIBLE

The use of bells is mentioned four times in the Old Testament of the Bible. Exodus: 28:33-35 describes the vestments worn by the high priest Aaron as he approached the Arc of the Covenant in the Holiest of Holies:

“On its skirts you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, around its skirts, with bells of gold between them, a golden bell and a pomegranate, round about on the skirts of the robe. And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the Lord, and when he comes out, lest he die.”



Some handheld sanctus bells can be quite ornate. This beautiful bronze set dating from the early 1900s sports a singing bird above each bell. Such sets are highly prized by collectors today. Photograph by author.

This description of Aaron's extremely ornate priestly vestments is repeated in Exodus 39:25-26 and again in Ecclesiasticus 45:9:

“And he encircled him with pomegranates, with very many golden bells round about, to send forth a sound as he walked, to make their ringing heard in the temple as a reminder to the sons of his people”

The bells were likely included as part of high-priest Aaron's vestments for two reasons. First, they created a joyful noise to God, which is something man should undertake as described in Psalm 98.4. Second, bells were long thought to possess apotropaic powers, or the power to ward off evil spirits. The bells were seen as tools to be used to avert dangers to Aaron before he entered the Holiest of Holies.

Bells were also used to signify adoration to God during early times as shown in Zechariah 14:20:

“And on that day there shall be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to the Lord." And the pots in the house of the Lord shall be as the bowls before the altar.”

Finally the ancient cymbals mentioned in Psalm 150:5-6 resembled water pitchers with wide open necks similar to the bells of today:⁶

“Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!”

USE OF SANCTUS BELLS

The majority of sanctus bells being rung during Mass today are of the handheld variety. Bronze sanctus bells, which can be quite expensive (typically \$200-500.00/set) are sonically far superior to their brass or cast iron counterparts. Most premium sanctus bell sets contain three to five tuned bells. Sanctus bells are traditionally kept on the epistle (left) side of the credence table (or sanctuary steps) during the Mass, and ringing them has long been the responsibility of the instituted acolyte or altar server.

The bells are rung at three or four points during the celebration of the Ordinary Form of the Mass:

- 1.) Sanctus bells are first rung prior to the consecration at the *epiclesis* where the priestly celebrant prays to the Holy Spirit to change the gifts of bread and wine into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

6. Lukianov, Rev. Roman. *A Brief History of Russian Bells*. The Bell Tower, volume 57, number 4, July-August 1999.

- 2.) The bells are rung a second time as the priest elevates and presents the Body of Christ in the form of the consecrated host.
- 3.) The bells are rung a third time as the celebrant elevates and presents the chalice filled with the Precious Blood.
- 4.) In many communities the bells are rung a fourth time as the celebrant consumes the Precious Blood. This custom which originates from the rubrics of the *Tridentine Mass* may be continued since it is not explicitly forbidden nor suppressed in the latest version of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

Sanctus bells may also be rung at specified times outside of the Mass such as during Holy Benediction and during adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Ringling techniques can vary as well. In some cases the bells are rung for three short bursts at both of the elevations/presentations as defined by the *Missale Romanum*⁷ for the *Tridentine Mass*. Some suggest these three short bursts represents the Holy Trinity. If executed well this style can sound quite solemn, but care must be taken not to overdue the ringing of the bells. When in doubt one should always rely on a single ringing of the bells at each specified point in the Mass.

7. *Missale Romanum (Roman Missal)*. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1962.



Ornate bronze sanctuary chimes were once commonly mounted near the altar or credence table. Photograph by author.

EASTERN CATHOLIC BELLS

The liturgical use of bells in the Catholic Church is certainly not limited to the Latin Rite. While Sanctus bells are not used in the Eastern Catholic⁸ (and Orthodox) churches during the celebration of the Divine Liturgies,⁹ other types of bells play important roles in some Eastern Catholic Rites.

Outdoor tower bells (ranging in size from small to the truly gigantic) are often rung in harmony just before, at the beginning, or during the *Anaphora*¹⁰ of the Divine Liturgies to create joyful noises to the Lord.

Before the advent of bells, many Eastern Catholics were long accustomed to the clacking sounds of hanging or handheld wooden boards known as *semantrons*. Semantrons are struck by special hammers at various points which produces sounds of various timbres. It was not the actual sound but the rhythm which carried the message, and this tradition continued with the arrival of bells. Bell ringing in the Eastern Catholic Churches (and the Western Church for that matter) became akin at times to the Hebrew shofars -- the ram's horn trumpets of the Old Testament used to proclaim the joys, sorrows and particularly the bloodless liturgical offerings to God.¹¹

In the Syro-Malankara and Syriac Catholic Churches, bells are attached to the *Marvahtho* (a long-handled fan.) The Marvahtho's design represents the face and wings of the Seraphim. They are shaken during the most solemn parts of the *Holy Qurbono* (Syrian Divine Liturgy.) They symbolize the presence of angels around the altar, and their sounds represent the noise made by the Seraphim's wings. The *Marvahtho* is also carried in procession during the Holy Qurbono.

Additionally in the East, many incense censers have either twelve or thirteen bells attached to their support chains. The twelve bells are used as a visual and audible representation of the Apostles. In some

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8. Today most Eastern Catholic parishes do not use Sanctus bells during their Liturgies. However, in the earlier part of the twentieth century in the USA, many Byzantine Catholic seminarians were taught to use the sanctus bells to mimic the Latin Rite practice. This unfortunate attempt at *Latinization* caught on in some places. The Vatican's Congregation for Oriental Churches formally abolished this practice when it issued official rubrics for the Byzantine-Ruthenian Church and other recensions which explicitly banned the use of sanctus bells in the Eastern Catholic liturgies.
 9. The Divine Liturgies of the Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Churches (including the *Holy Qurbono*) are analogous to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
 10. The *Anaphora* is the Greek term used for the Eucharistic Prayer in the East.
 11. Lukianov, Rev. Roman. *A Brief History of Russian Bells*. The Bell Tower, volume 57, number 4, July-August 1999.

cases a thirteenth bell (one that is incapable of producing a sound) is added to represent the fallen Judas Iscariot. The principal reason for these bells is to create a joyful noise to the Lord. In a more practical sense, the sound of the censer bells also helps to draw the congregation's attention to the activity at the altar.

BELL CONFUSION

Some individuals incorrectly believe that the only role of Sanctus bells is to signal the consecration of the Eucharist. Many who share this view feel the use of the bells is now obsolete or even retrogressive because the Mass can now be celebrated in the vernacular (versus Latin only), and because the celebrant can now face the faithful (versus having his back to the faithful) during the Mass, negating the need for a signal. This position might be plausible if indeed the Sanctus bells' only function was to indicate the confecting of the Eucharist. This however is not the case, given the multiple functions of the Sanctus bells.



Censers used in the Eastern Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches traditionally have twelve or thirteen bells attached to their three supporting chains to represent the Apostles. Photograph by author.

Because their use was *mandated* by the Council of Trent largely to signal the consecration, some might incorrectly surmise the use of sanctus bells began with Council of Trent (and *only* to signal the consecration) which is simply not the case. Others incorrectly believe that the use of sanctus bells during the celebration of the Ordinary Form of the Mass was prohibited by Vatican Council II. This is also untrue. When asked if bells are to be rung at Mass, the Church's Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship reinforced the direction documented in the GIRM with the following response in Volume 8 of their journal *Notitiae* in 1972:

It all depends on the different circumstances of places and people, as is clear from GIRM no. 109 (now number 150 in the current GIRM): "A little before the consecration the server may ring a bell as a signal to the faithful. Depending on local custom, he

also rings the bell at the showing of both the host and the chalice." From a long and attentive catechesis and education in liturgy, a particular liturgical assembly may be able to take part in the Mass with such attention and awareness that it has no need of this signal at the central part of the Mass. This may easily be the case, for example, with religious communities or with particular or small groups. The opposite may be presumed in a parish or public church, where there is a different level of liturgical and religious education and where often people who are visitors or are not regular churchgoers take part. In these cases the bell as a signal is entirely appropriate and is sometimes necessary. To conclude: usually a signal with the bell should be given, at least at the two elevations, in order to elicit joy and attention.'

This *notitiae* not only lays to rest the legend that sanctus bells were outlawed by Vatican Council II, it once again underscores their value for use during the celebration of all forms of the Mass.

The use of sanctus bells has been attacked through other avenues as well. Some wish to streamline the Mass by stripping away as many vestiges of the past as possible. Their rationale suggests that eliminating anything optional during the Mass helps the faithful to focus on Jesus Christ. One need only view a Pontifical Mass celebrated by the Pope of Rome at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran to understand the fallaciousness of this argument.

Perhaps the most pernicious rumor that still circulates regarding sanctus bells is that they came into use when "walls were built between the altar and the faithful." While rood (crucifix) screens (forerunner of communion rails) did indeed once hang between the altar and the faithful in some Anglo-Saxon churches during Medieval times, their use was never widespread throughout Christendom. History shows rood screens were hardly a primary reason for implementing the use of Sanctus bells.

Others suggest the use of sanctus bells interrupt the "seamlessness" or the "continuity" of the Mass, particularly during the Eucharistic Prayer.¹² There can be a shred of truth to this position when acolytes or altar servers are poorly trained (or not trained at all) in the ringing of sanctus bells. Proper training in the use of the bells, along with an appreciation for their function will eliminate this potential for problems.

12. The popular theological hypothesis of considering the entire Eucharistic Prayer as consecratory in the hopes of achieving a deeper understanding of the Eucharistic Mystery has some merit. It is terribly incorrect however to suggest that the actual transformation (of either species) does not take place instantaneously at a specific moment in time, that instead it is a gradual process that can be interrupted by the ringing of Sanctus bells. It's either bread or wine, *or* the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ -- there is no intermediate state.

Still others mistakenly suggest the spoken or sung Memorial Acclamation (example: *“We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.”*) now takes the place of ringing sanctus bells during the Mass. This idea is patently unsustainable for at least one very important reason. If the Memorial Acclamation did indeed take the place of ringing the sanctus bells, the Church would never have allowed the ringing of sanctus bells during either the celebration of the Extraordinary Form of the Mass (where altar boys or choirs were responsible for the Memorial Acclamation on behalf of the faithful) or the Ordinary Form Mass.

Finally some suggest that the confection and presentation of both forms of the Blessed Sacrament is no more significant than any other part of the Mass, and that it would be wrong to highlight these points. While the entire Mass is certainly a most awesome gift from God, it would be highly questionable to suggest these instances were not especially profound moments during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

THE “BELLS & SMELLS” OF TODAY

The use of Sanctus bells is enjoying a heartening renaissance in the Catholic Church today. As Catholic liturgical history becomes better disseminated and understood, more and more individuals are beginning to view the Sanctus bells as part of the rich sacramental tradition of the Catholic Church much like: holy water, the holy oils, statuary, iconography, clerical vestments, candles, incense, and historic and/or solemn places of worship.



Modern Sanctus bells often have a simple, utilitarian look but can still produce beautiful sounds due to their high quality bronze construction. Photograph by author.

Ask many Catholics today about the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (particularly those who have returned to the faith, those new to the faith, or those on their journey into the Church) and they will speak glowingly of the *bells and smells*. They understand that the bells and burning incense help them to connect to God in a deep and mysterious manner.

Moreover, in an era where a tragically large number of Catholics no longer believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist,¹³ the ringing of sanctus bells (and the use of incense) can underscore the miracle that takes place upon the altar. Ringing the bells also continues to create a joyful noise to the Lord, and one cannot discount the focusing effect the bells have on the faithful. Obviously, the use of sanctus bells is not necessary for the validity of the sacrament nor will it solve all worship problems, but properly used sanctus bells can be a powerful devotional aid in today's Catholic Church.

Finally, informal polling of Catholics today show a *strong* preference for the use of sanctus bells.¹⁴ With the increase in complaints that often accompany the use of incense, it's nice to know that at least half of the beloved *smells and bells* duo that is dear to so many Catholics poses no threat to the physical (and spiritual) wellbeing of the faithful.

13. The Gallup Organization conducted a telephone poll of 519 Catholics in America regarding their attitudes and beliefs about Holy Communion. The poll was conducted from December 10, 1991, to January 19, 1992 with an expected error rate of plus or minus five percent. Although the results of this poll have been wildly misrepresented, it still showed that only about 65-70% of those Catholic polled actually believed in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.
14. On August 30, 2004 a poll was launched on the *Catholic Answers* website (www.catholic.com) to gauge Catholic Christians' like or dislike of ringing sanctus bells at appropriate times during the Mass. The poll closed ninety days later on November 28, 2004 with 177 respondents. The results were conclusive with an astounding **94.92%** voting in favor of ringing sanctus bells during the Mass.



Many Catholic (and later Anglican) parishes particularly in the British Isles once placed small sanctus bells atop the rood screens which separated the chancel from the nave of the church. This was a refinement of using larger outdoor tower bells. Photograph courtesy of All Saints Church of Hawstead, UK.

ADDENDUM I - BAD BELLS

There appears to be only three valid reasons for not ringing Sanctus bells during the celebration of the Mass. First, some parishes no longer make use of altar servers. The gross proliferation of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion in some parishes have pushed aside the ministry of altar server. Obviously without altar servers, Sanctus bells cannot be rung at the appropriate points during the Mass. One solution might be to return to the tradition of years past and ring large tower bells from the belfry during the Mass.

Second, poorly trained, untrained and/or incapable altar servers are



A gorgeous three-bell bronze sanctuary chime from the once proud Van Duzen & Tift Buckeye Bell Foundry of Cincinnati. While chimes like these are beautiful to look at, they sound a bit too much like the famed NBC Television chime to be rung during the Mass except perhaps by experts. Photograph by author.

also a valid reason not to ring sanctus bells. Ringing sanctus bells at an incorrect point during the Mass is a serious matter. Altar servers need to be thoroughly trained in the history and use of sanctus bells. They also need to be intrinsically capable of closely following the Mass and ringing the bells at the right moments. If the altar servers happen to be extremely young for instance, it may make sense to forgo the ringing of the bells.

Finally, the use of substitutes for genuine sanctus bells has also quite rightfully soured many on the ringing of bells during the Mass. Old cow bells, gongs, Tibetan singing bowls, xylophones, etc. are all unacceptable substitutes for true sanctus bells per the Catholic Church.^{15, 16}

15. Sacred Congregation of Rites (Decree of September 10, 1898.) Negative response to Archbishop of Mexico on request to use gong.

16. *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia*. Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy Sacred Congregation for Rites. September 3, 1958.

ADDENDUM II - “BAPTISM” OF BELLS

Bells (including sanctus bells) have long been blessed before being placed into service in the Church. The blessing of bells has often been incorrectly referred to as the "baptism of bells" due to the extremely solemn process of blessing of bells in years past which resembled a baptism and to the bigoted views of some opponents of the Church.

The former ritual for blessing bells called for: washing the bells with holy water, anointing the exterior of the bells with the Oil of the Sick (*Oleum Infirmorum*), anointing the interior of the bell with Sacred Chrism, placing a censer filled with burning incense under each bell, special prayers, and readings from Sacred Scripture.¹⁷

Today the order for the blessing of bells is simplified. It closely resembles the Liturgy of the Word including this beautiful *Prayer of Blessing*:¹⁸



A far better choice would be a swinging-bell sanctuary chime as shown above. The Doppler-effect generated by the swinging of the bells is especially pleasing. Photograph by author.

“We praise you, Lord, Father all-holy. To a world wounded and divided by sin you sent your only Son. He gave His life for His sheep, to gather them into one fold and to guide and feed them as their one shepherd.

May your people hasten to your church when they hear the call of this bell.

May they persevere in the teaching of the apostles, in steadfast fellowship, in unceasing prayer, and in the breaking of the bread. May they remain ever one in mind and heart to the glory of your name.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The bells are then sprinkled with holy water and incensed.

17. Sullivan, Very Rev. John F. *The Externals of the Catholic Church: Her Government, Ceremonies, Festivals, Sacraments, and Devotions*. New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1918.

18. Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops Conferences. *Book of Blessings*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1989.

ADDENDUM III - NOTA BENE

Researching the history and use of sanctus bells in the Church and receiving feedback on this monograph has been an extremely edifying experience. It's remarkable how much passion many Catholic Christians feel for sanctus bells (and church bells in general.) While it has been my experience that *far* more Catholics cherish rather than condemn the ringing of sanctus bells, there is a great deal of emotion both for and against ringing the bells. A level of emotion that sadly appears to out-strip the actual function of the bells during the celebration of the Mass.

This suggests that there is another dimension to the use of sanctus bells that has not yet been discussed in this work. Namely that the use or non-use of sanctus bells is often a very symbolic and strong indicator of the state of the Mass in any given Catholic parish.

To better understand this we need to go back to 1969 and the promulgation of the "new Mass." Many changes that effected how the Mass would be celebrated were implemented during this period, including the removal of sanctus bells from the sanctuaries of many parishes. Like many changes, the removal of sanctus bells from the Mass was never directed by the Church. Their use remained officially optional, yet many took it upon themselves to denigrate the ringing of sanctus bells (and other valid activities) under the guise of the so-called "spirit" of Vatican II. *Changes were made simply for the sake of changes.* This in turn upset those who understood the value of the bells in terms not only of making a joyful noise to the Lord (Psalm 98.4) but as important devotional aids. It also set the stage for further conflict.

Fortunately things have changed a great deal since 1969. Talk to many (most?) Catholics today (especially converts and reverts to the faith) and they often long for more solemnity in the Mass, particularly more of the "smells and bells" that were once so common in years past. Unfortunately their desires collide head-on with those who have worked so diligently for so long to remove these very elements from the celebration of the Mass.

The results are predictable. Those who put so much effort into banishing the bells now struggle to maintain the status quo, often resorting to some rather creative (albeit erroneous) arguments in the hopes of keeping the bells silent. Those who would like to see the return of the bells are forced to shoulder the burden of showing why the bells should be rung. This monograph is an example of doing just that.

The bottom-line is this: If the faithful want to hear the bells and if the pitfalls outlined in Addendum I can be avoided, there is no reason why the bells should remain silent. Conversely, this monograph shows a great many reasons why sanctus bells should indeed be rung.

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SANCTUS BELLS

HISTORY AND USE IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Most Catholic Christians (at least the more mature ones) are familiar with Sanctus bells. Many wonder about them. Some long to hear their joyful sounds. Still others erroneously believe their use during the Mass is now either no longer needed or is prohibited altogether by the Church. This short monograph explores the history (both fact and fiction) and current use of Sanctus bells, plus their potential as powerful devotional aids in today's Catholic Church.



An antique five-bell bronze "gloria wheel" once used during the celebration of the Mass. Such instruments are simple to use and create truly glorious sounds as an offering to God.