

Devotional Editor's Picks Interview News Analysis The estimated reading time is 12 minutes

# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: Cardinal Arthur Roche – ‘If they only knew that most days I celebrate Mass in Latin’

Thomas Edwards March 7, 2025 at 9:30 am



Cardinal Arthur Roche is one of four English cardinals currently serving – a record high for the country. As the youngest among them, Cardinal Roche, 74, holds significant influence as Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and as a key adviser to Pope Francis.

In this exclusive interview, marking the Golden Jubilee of his ordination, Cardinal Roche reflects on his five decades of priesthood and distinguished service to the Church. He shares his insights on the Synod of Synodality, discussing its significance for the Church's future, and addresses the pressing challenges of liturgical formation in the contemporary context.

The cardinal also offers his perspective on the Traditional Latin Mass, considering its role in the modern Church and underlining the essential need for unity in worship practices. Throughout the conversation, he speaks with his characteristic humility and pastoral sensitivity, offering a rare glimpse into the experiences and convictions of one of the UK's most senior prelates. His reflections span a lifetime of service, engaging with the Church's past, present and future with clarity and conviction.

**CH: One of the phenomena that has become apparent in the modern Church is the devotion that young people have to the Traditional Latin Mass, the 1962 Roman Missal promulgated by Pope John XXIII. What advice would you give to those who want to remain faithful members of the Church and love the Latin Mass but find themselves restricted in attending?**

CR: Of course, it is good that people want to be part of the Church, and there is no reason why they cannot. There is nothing wrong with attending the Mass celebrated with the 1962 missal. That has been accepted since the time of Pope St John Paul II, Pope Benedict and now Pope Francis.

What Pope Francis said in *Traditionis Custodes* is that it is not the norm. For very good reasons, the Church, through conciliar legislation, decided to move away from what had become an overly elaborate form of celebrating the Mass.

When I was at school, I used to serve Mass, and the priest would say to me: "Remember, boy, it's 20 minutes, amice to amice." What he meant was that as soon as he put the amice [liturgical vestment] around his neck, I was to start counting the minutes until he took it off at the end of Mass. If, by chance, he reached the last Gospel by 15 minutes, I had to pull the back of his chasuble. It was a sort of scruple, I suppose, but something very different from what people experience in the Extraordinary Form today.

One of the things that has been very interesting to me is observing this situation worldwide. The numbers devoted to the Traditional Latin Mass are, in reality, quite small, but some of the groups are quite clamorous. They are more noticeable because they make their voices heard.

Another important point is that one of the major reforms of the Second Vatican Council was in *Dei Verbum*, which recognised that the scriptures needed to become more and more part of the daily diet of every Catholic Christian.

In the lectionary from the *Novus Ordo*, there is a three-year cycle for Sundays and a two-year cycle for weekday readings. There is a much lower percentage of scriptural readings in the 1962 missal than there are in the newer missal.

What interests me is why people get hot under the collar about others celebrating the Tridentine Mass. I think this has been a mistake. Bishop Wheeler, of the Diocese of Leeds, insisted that a Holy Mass be celebrated in Latin according to the *Novus Ordo* at least once every Sunday in every deanery. That showed considerable wisdom.

From my perspective, the celebration of the Eucharist, in whichever missal you are using, should be very noble and marked by noble simplicity.

I often hear people say, "Cardinal Roche is against the Latin Mass." Well, if they only knew that most days I celebrate Mass in Latin because it is the common language for all of us here. It is the *Novus Ordo* Mass in Latin. I was trained as an altar boy until the age of 20, serving the Tridentine Form.

**CH: Your Eminence, thank you for your time, and please be assured of our prayers for you and your office.**

CR: Thank you, and God bless.

\* Note:  
The date is incorrect.  
It was published 6  
March 2025 or earlier.

**I**TS EDITORS LEFT NO STONE turned in their quest for the best versions of these ancient Catholic hymns, combing through centuries of English translations from the sixteenth century to the present day. In the process, they have revealed much little-known material, and some that is published in a hymnal for the first time. [They] navigate this difficult terrain with assurance; indeed, the editors' explanation of the Urbanite reform and its impact on English translators is a model of clarity, and contains information this reviewer has not encountered elsewhere.

—Dr. Aaron James: 2019 review of the *Brébeuf Catholic Hymnal* in the *Journal of the Society for Catholic Liturgy* • <https://ocwatershed.org/hymn/>