

## Traditionalists On-line A Force to be Reckoned With

If by circumstance or choice you have discussed matters of morality or faith on Internet discussion forums, you have likely chanced upon an unexpected discovery: the majority of the serious debaters on these forums are Traditional Catholics. Yes, some other terms both pejorative or otherwise are used, such as “radical right-wing Catholics” or “Rad Traddies”. In spite of their small numbers as a percentage of the Catholic population, they are, however, the predominant Catholic group in on-line forums that have an “edge”, those forums that feature more than marshmallow and fluff. These “Rad Traddies” are smarter, more militant, and more battle-scarred than the general Catholic population; and consequently, also masters of sarcasm and the bunker mentality.

An example of this would be the Catholic website 4Marks.com and its sister site CatholicMatch.com. Neither of these sites cater specifically to Traditional Catholics (CatholicMatch is a 1.5 million member dating site, while 4Marks is a very well-designed general-interest social forum), and yet whenever a controversial topic appears on these discussion forums it is the Traditionalists who almost invariably dominate after the first few volleys have been fired. Nor does this seem to be a mere fad.

If “fad” is what one seeks, then look no further than the so-called “charismatic renewal”. With so much emphasis in Catholic newspapers and dioceses upon this “renewal”, it is greatly surprising that these “charismatics” have so little influence on the serious discussion forums. Numbers are surprisingly small, and apologetic skills are even smaller.

As mentioned above, 4Marks is a very well-designed Catholic-oriented social forum. For all of its lush design, however, it should be noted that it is amazingly inactive. But that is a discussion for another day. In any case, it is interesting to note the names of the groups and the number of members in each group. Other than perennially-popular discussions of sex and politics, it is the Traditional groups that have surprisingly large memberships:

Looking at the groups and members listings below, we see a number of points of interest, some of which have been highlighted for readability. There is “Relevant Radio” at the top, understandably so because it is the nature of the forum to have articles posted, and there are often hopes that such articles may receive radio time. “40 Days for Life” is next, which in some ways typifies post-Roe vs. Wade Catholicism. “Theology of the Body for Everyone” is a unique example of an unhealthy mix of fallen man’s obsession with sex combined with papalotry. The “Knights of Columbus” show strength in the forum numbers; and, as a side note, they also seem to be undergoing a revival in the non-Internet culture. “Catholic Humor” is a big attraction, as it should be.

We notice “Guadalupanos” as one of the first non-inclusive groups, as its title would tend to suggest American Hispania. Looking at the actual group members, however, would tend to indicate that the only Hispanicism in many of the members is a sympathy and a college Spanish course.

Tridentine Catholics, on the other hand, is an inclusive group, but at the same time polarizing. It can not be easily circumvented that if the Traditional Latin Rite is right, then the man-made modern Latin rite is intrinsically defective. We see another Traditional group “Pittsburgh Latin Mass” further down the list, followed closely by “Traditional Catholics”.

Note that “Pittsburgh Latin Mass” is the largest group in the entire listing that has a reference to a specific geographic reference. For instance, the next largest geographically-oriented listing is “Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis” and “Midwest Catholics”. In other words, it seems possible that there are more serious Internet-savvy Catholics in the Pittsburgh Latin Mass community than there are in the entire Midwest or at least St. Paul/Minneapolis.

As a side note, we see tied in size to these latter two geographically-oriented communities is the misplaced “ConvertObama.com”. Someone should remind these people that although conversion is of greater importance, it is a more immediate duty to remove an illegitimate usurper.

We notice that Byzantine Catholics are only a smallish fraction of those of the Traditionalis Latin orientation.

Note how far down the list is the much-promoted “Cursillo”. Apparently, the volumes of unhealthy propaganda have not been greatly effective.

The big state of “California Catholics” has a somewhat feeble presence, as do “Catholic Democrats”. Note that “Pittsburgh Latin Mass” is more than three times larger than “Pittsburgh Catholics”.

The very problematic “Medjugorje heaven on earth” is very far down the list, in spite of volumes of propaganda.

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