

Tridentine Community News

July 16, 2006

Tridentine Travelogue: London, England, Part 3

The Latin Mass scene in England's capital is so active that we could devote several more columns to it. For now, we will wrap up our coverage of the fascinating Catholic liturgical life of this city with a mention of two more churches of note.

Corpus Christi Church, Covent Garden

As the center of London's thriving theater district, Covent Garden is best known for being the home of a slew of playhouses where many of today's best known plays and musicals got their start. Near the main square in Covent Garden is a tiny street called Maiden Lane, and on that street is the historic church of Corpus Christi. Despite its small size, Corpus Christi is known as the home of some of London's most solemn Tridentine Masses.



Every Monday and First Friday at 6:30 PM, a sung Missa Cantata is offered. The only solemn Tridentine celebration of the Easter Triduum in London is held there. No Latin Mass is offered on Sundays, but plenty are offered nearby. For those of you with a musical bent, Corpus Christi has extended an open invitation for visitors from other Tridentine communities to sing with their choir at the Monday night Mass. What a marvelous opportunity to experience the true catholicity of our faith, to chant the immemorial Propers and Ordinary of the Mass, a continent away.

Westminster Cathedral

The city of London is divided approximately in half by the Thames River. South of the Thames is the Archdiocese of Southwark. North of the Thames is the Archdiocese of Westminster, whose mother church is Westminster Cathedral. This enormous edifice is home to the Westminster Cathedral Choir School, whose boys' choir sings a hybrid Latin-English Novus Ordo Mass Saturdays and Sundays at 10:30 AM, and Monday-Friday at 5:30 PM. In addition, a Low Novus Ordo Latin Mass is offered in a side chapel daily at 10:30 AM. On the second Saturday of the month, a Tridentine Low Mass is offered at 4:30 PM. Every Sunday afternoon, Solemn Vespers and Benediction

are chanted in Latin at 3:30 PM. Once per year, a Pontifical Solemn High Tridentine Mass is held at the main altar. If you visit, be sure to stop by the Catholic Truth Society bookshop in the cathedral courtyard, where you will find numerous missals, prayer books, and magazines devoted to the Tridentine liturgy. Further information about this exemplary cathedral may be found at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk.



Photo courtesy of the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales

Diocesan Support for Traditional Music

The prevalence of traditional Gregorian Chant and sacred polyphony in London churches is not an accident. Yes, the elevated culture of the city is partially responsible, as is the high liturgical standard set by many Anglican churches. But one must also recognize the unusual support which the Archdiocese of Westminster extends towards traditional celebration of the liturgy.

For example, take a look at the Archdiocesan web site www.masterofmusic.org, which promotes learning of the traditional repertoire in several innovative ways. A young man can be a "Chorister for a Day" in the Cathedral Choir, to see if he might be interested in applying for the choir school. Weekly music programs for the Cathedral are posted, listing even the music played at the *weekday* Masses. Chant workshops are held every few months, as part of the new *Canticum Populi* program: "...the new initiative at Westminster Cathedral to bring good music to parishes of the Diocese and the Nation, for anyone to sing...It is hoped that the chants sung by *Canticum Populi* will be taken back to parishes and used widely. They are based on Gregorian Chant, the Church's own music. They don't attempt to conform to any musical fashions and so they will not date. This music has grown out of the liturgy over centuries and fits perfectly."

We can only pray that other dioceses around the world will take similar leads in promoting traditional music in their own parishes. As for us here in Detroit and Windsor, a visit to the truly vibrant liturgical city of London shows us what is possible. It should inspire us to render the best worship we can right here, within our own abilities and resources, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

Questions? Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail tridnews@stjosaphatchurch.org with your thoughts.