

# Tridentine Community News

July 23, 2006

## *LLA 2006 Convention Report, Part 1 of 2*

Last weekend, the Latin Liturgy Association held its biennial convention in St. Louis, Missouri. From the very first convention in Washington, DC in 1986, this event has been one of the premiere opportunities for those interested in traditional liturgy to hear talks, experience exemplary liturgies, and network with likeminded individuals. This year's convention was no exception.

The meeting kicked off on Friday, July 14 with an all-day tour of historic churches in St. Louis, led by architectural preservationist and LLA member Max Kaiser. Max has been actively involved in the restoration of a number of churches in St. Louis. He advocates raising the profile of historic churches as community resources to better utilize them and attract non-traditional funding sources. Max believes that supporters of Latin liturgy must take an active role in preserving our older churches, as we have a functional, and not just aesthetic, motivation to keep them intact.



Notable churches visited included the Shrine of St. Joseph ([www.shrineofstjoseph.org](http://www.shrineofstjoseph.org)), an enormous church near downtown that had been slated for demolition in the late 1970s. A volunteer group acquired the church, and over the past 25 years raised millions of dollars to restore it to its original splendor. Though it is no longer a parish, one Sunday Mass is still held there weekly. A spectacularly illuminated high altar and reredos dominate the interior. Detroiters could not help but compare this effort to our local St. Albertus Church, similarly owned by a volunteer group, but struggling for funds.

The “New Cathedral” ([www.cathedralstl.org](http://www.cathedralstl.org)), is so named because the original “Old Cathedral” on the Mississippi riverfront still operates as a church. The New Cathedral is an unwreckovated, awe-inspiring enormous church whose walls are covered with detailed mosaics. The sanctuary includes a high altar under a baldachino (umbrella-like covering structure), at which Mass may be celebrated either *ad orientem* or *versus populum*. There is no “table altar”.

Just as the Diocese of London and the Archdiocese of Detroit are neighbors across the Detroit River, the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois is right across the Mississippi River from the Archdiocese

of St. Louis. There, a weekly Tridentine Mass is held in Holy Family “Log” Church, opened in 1799 and built of wooden timbers. Though humble and small, it reminds us of the continuity of the faith that our forefathers brought to our continent.



Surprisingly, many of these churches were air conditioned. Locally, the only historic churches that this writer believes are air conditioned are Greektown’s Old St. Mary’s and Holy Family.

St. Louis resembles metropolitan Detroit in that a large percentage (41%) of the population is Catholic. As a result, historic Catholic churches dot the area. The urban renewal process is substantially further along than Detroit’s, resulting in a clean and revitalized downtown. Many formerly abandoned buildings have been refurbished and reopened. The tour left the impression that this momentum has also caused many historic churches to be restored to top-notch condition. Our local leadership could certainly learn some lessons from their St. Louis brethren.

## *Speakers*

As usual, the LLA assembled an impressive roster of speakers. Fr. Frank Phillips, pastor of Chicago’s famed St. John Cantius Church, and one of North America’s leading proponents of the Tridentine Mass, spoke about the legacy of Msgr. Martin Hellriegel, who built a thriving liturgical life at St. Louis’ Holy Cross Church in the 1950s. He encouraged all parishioners to learn the chants of the Mass and Divine Office, in an era when such participation was not the norm.

Msgr. Michael Schmitz, North American Provincial (Superior) of the Institute of Christ the King (more about them later), spoke about the Institute, and the role of traditional liturgy in the modern church.

Helen Hull Hitchcock, co-founder of Adoremus, addressed her organization’s efforts to bring about a “Reform of the Reform” of the Novus Ordo. Her husband, Dr. James Hitchcock, spoke about the founding of the LLA in 1975 and the role of Latin in today’s liturgical renewal.

Chant expert Fr. Samuel Weber, OSB, discussed effective methods of teaching chant to children. Dr. Richard Haefer led a workshop on singing the office of Compline, in the process demystifying many of the obscure symbols of chant notation.

Next week, we will cover the liturgies presented at the convention, as well as the base of operations, St. Francis de Sales Oratory.