

Tridentine Community News

November 26, 2006

Tridentine Travelogue:

Holy Rosary Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

Tridentine Mass communities come in all shapes and sizes. On the low end, there are some very small groups relegated to out-of-the-way chapels at inconvenient times. On the other end, one finds fully Tridentine parishes, sometimes in magnificent edifices like St. Louis' St. Francis de Sales Oratory. But most of us are in the middle somewhere.

Some of us may dream about having a fully Tridentine parish one day, but the reality is that most Tridentine communities cannot afford their own facilities. Even if they were given a perfect church building gratis, most Tridentine communities could not pay for the upkeep of those buildings.

Also worth noting is that most full Tridentine parishes are based in very humble buildings. For instance, even Sacramento's thriving St. Stephen the First Martyr parish is located in a relatively small and architecturally unimpressive church.

The ideal setting for the Tridentine Mass is a majestic, classical church building, with the architecture, ornamentation, organ, and sheer scale to befit the Classical Roman Rite. In North America, those facilities are largely in downtown locations well past their prime.

Logically, then, the ideal Tridentine Mass environment is one based in such a historic building, but where the Tridentine community is not fully financially responsible for the building's upkeep. A "roommate" is needed; the building must be shared with another congregation.

"Well, that's exactly what we have now!" one might exclaim. True, the Detroit Tridentine Mass shares its facilities with the original Novus Ordo congregation at St. Josaphat. And we should be grateful: The Novus Ordo collections and fundraising brunches contribute well over half of the revenue of the parish, while the Tridentine community "costs" the parish more than the Novus Ordo members, for vestments, supplies, and church refurbishment specifically for the benefit of the Tridentine Mass. The Windsor Tridentine Community similarly shares St. Michael Church with the original German parish and the clustered Immaculate Heart parish.

As beneficial as these arrangements are, they are not a relationship of equals. The Latin Mass congregation is subordinate to the Novus Ordo congregation, in large part because we are limited to one weekly Mass. And over the long haul, it's not fair that the Novus Ordo goers subsidize the Tridentine members. So what model can we look toward? Who has done the parish-sharing concept right?

One of the best examples can be found at Holy Rosary Church, near downtown Indianapolis. This historically Italian parish has seen its numbers decline like most urban parishes over the past fifty years. Its ample facilities include a school, convent, social hall, and beautiful Romanesque church, "un-wreckovated" in 1998. A partner needed to be found to ensure the continued survival of the parish.

Archbishop Daniel Buechlein of Indianapolis saw an opportunity to create a shared parish environment between the original Italian Novus Ordo community and the local Tridentine group. First, he brought in the Fraternity of St. Peter to serve the Latin Mass community. The FSSP priest serves as Associate Pastor and handles much of the administrative work in the parish. Second, he permitted a full sacramental life, where everything from weddings to the Sacrament of the Sick is permitted according to the Traditional formulas. Third, he encouraged a fully shared parish life. Half the Masses offered during the week are Tridentine, half Novus Ordo.

Holy Rosary is such a successful example of parish sharing that it was selected to be the host church for the 2004 Latin Liturgy Association convention.

But that's not all. Smaller Tridentine communities in rural Indiana needed attention, too. Through a cooperative relationship with neighboring dioceses, the Fraternity priest at Holy Rosary travels to celebrate Mass at smaller neighbor communities as well. In essence, Holy Rosary is a base of operations for several Indiana Tridentine communities. This is a financially responsible way to provide for the needs of smaller groups of faithful.

This is a realistic model for those of us in Windsor and Detroit to aim for. One need only visit Holy Rosary and witness the cooperative coexistence there oneself. It is a marriage of equals. Hopefully as time goes by, restrictions on number of Masses and other sacraments in our region will be relaxed, so that we can attain a similarly balanced relationship at our own host parishes. We need to support our Novus Ordo hosts, just as they have already supported us. Together, we create the sacramental vitality needed for our parishes to survive.

Read more about this inspiring parish at www.holyrosaryindy.org.

As a footnote, special thanks is due to Holy Rosary for giving us permission to use the text and design of their handout, "Let Us Pray The Latin Mass", to create our own welcoming brochure. The whole tone of this text is positive, inviting, and encouraging, reflecting the atmosphere this writer has experienced firsthand at Holy Rosary.

