

Tridentine Community News

April 29, 2007

Tridentine Travelogue:

St. Joseph Hospital Chapel, London, Ontario

Think about the last time that you entered a local hospital. Chances are the place was bustling with activity. Visitors coming in and out, welcome desks with staff ready to guide you to the location you are seeking, hospital employees dashing about, perhaps a gift shop or cafeteria open.

Well, that is not what you see upon entering London's St. Joseph Hospital on a Sunday afternoon. You see...absolutely no one. No staff, no visitors, empty desks near the entry doors...where is everyone? You're here for the Tridentine Mass, offered in the hospital chapel. But where is that? Are there any building directories? Yes, but none that mention the chapel. So what do you do?

The answer is in the gift shop. The main floor's lone Sunday employee is the gift shop manager, who tells you that the chapel is on the second floor. OK, take the elevator up and...where is it? Another floor devoid of people opens in front of you. Yes, there are rooms, but no visible patients. Utter silence. Is this hospital even functioning? Where is everybody? But if you go down to the end of one hallway, what you are seeking awaits: a traditionally appointed chapel seating about 100, complete with choir loft and organ.

The St. Joseph Hospital Chapel is the former and current home of the Tridentine indult Mass in the city of London. Out-of-the-way though the chapel might seem, the Diocese of London based in this city has been a pioneer in the Tridentine Mass scene. It has:



Cathedral.

- Approved the first Tridentine Mass in our region in Windsor in 1991.

- Hosted the first Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP) ordination in Canada at London's St. Peter's Cathedral on March 4, 2000 (see photo at left and

http://www.unavoce.org/fssp_ordinations0300.htm).

- Hosted an FSSP priest as celebrant of the London indult Mass, and stationed him as an associate pastor at St. Peter's

- Listed the FSSP celebrants on its monthly calendar of priests to pray for, an extraordinary gesture of good will considering that the current celebrants do not even reside in the diocese.

- Been remarkably supportive of, and open to, the Tridentine Mass before other dioceses were, and in a diocese where other than from Tridentine Mass advocates, there doesn't seem to be much of a demand for traditional liturgy from laypeople.

The London Mass' first home was at St. Joseph Hospital Chapel. Later, it moved to Blessed Sacrament Church, a modern, generic structure, for a few years while the FSSP priest was stationed there. The place was acoustically dead and not an appropriate setting for the Traditional Mass. When the FSSP priest transferred to another diocese, the Mass went dormant for a while, and only in the spring of 2006 resumed at its original home at the hospital. Now, the Mass is administered by FSSP priests stationed in St. Catherine's, Ontario, and is only offered once per month until

arrangements can be made for a priest to come more often. The Mass time is 4:00 PM on the third Sunday of the month, to allow commute time for the priest.

St. Joseph is a dollhouse-like chapel. Everything is in miniature scale. It is in well-preserved condition except for the absence of a communion rail. The FSSP regularly hosts Solemn High Masses there despite the challenges of the compact space.

One of the people who got the London Mass organized in the first place ten years ago, and who is still instrumental in its administration, is Mr. Shawn Tribe, today best known as the creator of the New Liturgical Movement blog (<http://thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com>). This web site has become the principal relay of news pertaining to both the "Reform of the Reform" (a push for a more conservative, Latin-inclusive Novus Ordo), as well as developments on the Tridentine front. It is heavy on substantive news and optimism. An unusually high proportion of constructive comments vs. negative ones are seen there.

But note to self: Don't get sick in London on a Sunday. The hospital has the day off.

New Hymnals On Their Way

Thanks to a number of donations in response to Fr. Mark's request, St. Josaphat's share of the "Traditional Roman Hymnal" order has been fully paid for. A special thanks is due to Dr. John Ruckdeschel, who generously contributed over half of the cost.

The St. Josaphat and St. Michael Tridentine Communities are placing a joint order with the publisher to take advantage of a quantity discount to benefit us both. We hope to have the new hymnals by the middle of May.

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