

Tridentine Community News

May 6, 2007

Msgr. Peter Elliott Named Auxiliary Bishop in Sydney

Previous editions of this column have made mention of Msgr. Peter Elliott. Author of liturgical guidebooks “Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite” and “Ministry At The Altar” among others, Msgr. Elliott has produced scholarly books about the rubrics of the Novus Ordo that no one else has undertaken. He has toured the world lecturing on proper celebration of the Holy Mass and even concelebrated a Latin Novus Ordo Mass *ad orientem* at St. Josaphat in 2005.

Though his specialty is not the Tridentine Mass, all those who love traditional liturgy of either the Novus Ordo or Tridentine forms should be delighted to learn that Msgr. Elliott has been named this past week as an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia. In much the same way as Chicago Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Perry’s continual advocacy of reverent liturgy has borne fruit in that Archdiocese, we have reason to believe that Bishop-elect Elliott will now have a broader platform from which to promote attentiveness to the rubrics.

Let us pray that Bishop-elect Elliott’s new responsibilities do not entirely distract him from continuing to write and speak internationally.

RIP, Msgr. Richard Schuler

Long before the first Tridentine Mass indult in 1984, indeed even before England’s “Agatha Christie” indult in 1971, in the years immediately after Vatican II, there were precious few churches in North America where traditional-style liturgy could be found. Locally, we had St. Joseph Church. Boston had St. Paul’s, although it should be noted that St. Paul’s enjoys exceptional sacred music, but not traditional actions in the sanctuary. These and other similar parishes throughout North America operated quietly, with virtually no publicity, and no national newsletter or magazine at that time that would promote their Masses.



Standing out from the pack in this era was one Fr. Richard Schuler, appointed pastor of St. Agnes Church in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1969. Fr. Schuler’s great love was sacred music. Almost alone in North America, he devoted his pastorate to implementing what *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II’s document on the sacred liturgy, directed: Use of Gregorian Chant. Use of Latin, indeed full Novus Ordo Latin Masses in an era when virtually no others existed. Precise attention to the rubrics. Full orchestral Masses approximately one third of the Sundays of the year! His Sunday orchestral Latin Masses were often standing-room-only.

Founder of the Twin Cities Catholic Chorale in 1955, and longtime President of the Church Music Association of America, Msgr. Schuler seemed to enjoy conducting the orchestra and choir

as much as celebrating Holy Mass. And this was no ordinary group of volunteer musicians: Members of the Minnesota Orchestra are regular participants in the music program. Today, multiple choirs exist at St. Agnes, with different specialties: The



original Chorale specializing in polyphony, a chant schola, a chamber choir, and a high school chorale.

Msgr. Schuler also retained the “look and feel”

of the Tridentine Mass perhaps more so than any other Novus Ordo parish anywhere: All Masses celebrated *ad orientem*. Fiddleback vestments. Birettas. Deacons accompanying the celebrant at the altar. Use of a Communion Rail cloth.

St. Agnes itself is a baroque beauty inside, adoringly maintained. Even the basement chapel used for daily Mass is configured solely for *ad orientem* celebration. The parish campus includes a high school and resembles a larger, more ornate version of Wyandotte’s Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Not surprisingly, the parish has produced a sizable number of vocations to the priesthood.



We see echoes of what Msgr. Schuler established locally at St. Joseph, Old St. Mary, and Assumption Grotto Churches. But we have to remember that in 1969, he was doing all this with no precedent. There was no other parish he could point to, to justify his actions. His was a work of courage and vision. Furthermore, what he established there has continued through subsequent pastors. Attendance at the parish remained strong past Msgr. Schuler’s retirement, something that is not necessarily a given when one personality so characterizes a place.

While Msgr. Schuler did not actively advocate the Tridentine Mass, he did allow it in his parish for special occasions, for example during the two Latin Liturgy Association conventions that were held at St. Agnes.

In so many situations in life, we emulate others. It is fair to say that in the realm of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, all of us who love reverently celebrated Masses owe a debt of gratitude to Msgr. Schuler. His example has inspired countless other parishes worldwide to undertake their own similar efforts. Even today, it is common to compare a Tridentine Mass’ music program to that of St. Agnes. While our budgets and congregations may be smaller, St. Agnes provides a model that we can strive for within our own particular situations and limitations.

Réquiem aeternam dona ei Dómine, et lux perpétua lucéat ei.

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