

Tridentine Community News

June 10, 2007

The Maturing of St. Josaphat's Tridentine Community

Approximately two and half years have passed since the establishment of the Tridentine Mass in the Archdiocese of Detroit at St. Josaphat Church. Our congregation has stabilized and is experiencing slow but steady growth. We have pleasantly surprised some in the Archdiocese by being a peaceful, uncontroversial bunch. The time has come for a self-examination, to see how we can take things to the next level. A successful parish community is built around a number of aspects of Parish Life. Some we do well, some we do not:

Liturgy: The primary reason we come to St. Josaphat is for the Tridentine Mass itself. Because so many people here have such a deep love for the Classical Roman Liturgy, our execution of it has gone well. It would be nice to have a larger choir; all of us need to encourage those we know who enjoy singing, in or out of St. Josaphat, to join our choir. We simply cannot afford regular, professional (paid) singers at this time.

Volunteering: Outside of the Mass itself, the Tridentine Community is not really doing its fair share of work around the parish. Many more "Novus Ordians" than "Tridentiners" handle the grounds maintenance, and setup and takedown of holiday decorations, for instance. There are plenty of opportunities for additional volunteering, such as running a Homeschooling Mothers' Group or activities along the lines of our successful new Latin Class. Rather than pointing fingers and saying, "You should have a (fill in the blank) here", how about conceiving and offering to help run an activity yourself?

Stewardship: No one likes talking about this, but it is a reality we must acknowledge. To enjoy the beautiful St. Josaphat facility, we must financially support the institution. On the positive side, our weekly collections have been trending upward, ever so slowly. However, Sunday offerings are only part of the revenue of the parish. The remainder comes from fundraising activities, most notably the monthly fundraising dinners held by the Novus Ordo community. Those dinners produce not only ticket sales, but revenue from raffles and bar sales. An average dinner raises approximately \$1,800, whereas each of our two annual Tridentine fundraising brunches raises only about \$600.

The Novus Ordo community is also the source of the majority of special donations, such as those that paid for the restoration of the chandeliers, side altars, and high pulpit. We owe our Novus Ordo brethren a debt of gratitude for essentially underwriting the costs of restoring St. Josaphat for the Tridentine Mass. Overall, approximately 65% of the parish revenue comes from the Novus Ordo community, despite their smaller numbers.

It is perhaps a blessing in disguise that we have not yet been able to locate a suitable organ for relocation into St. Josaphat. It is not clear that we have the ability to see this project through to completion. It will probably cost between \$100,000-200,000. The organ will primarily benefit the Tridentine community; should we not be the primary contributors? We need to identify potential benefactors.

In general, the Tridentine Community needs to reflect on how it can increase its stewardship. Perhaps other forms of fundraising besides the brunches would be more suitable.

A recurring rumor that may be limiting our fundraising is that the Sunday offering somehow ends up in the hands of the Archdiocese of Detroit. In actuality, 94% of every collection except Christmas remains with St. Josaphat. 100% of the Christmas collection stays with the parish. 6% is an Archdiocesan tax that is imposed on all parishes. In this respect, the Tridentine Mass collection is no different from every other Sunday collection in every other parish in the Archdiocese. The diocese does not otherwise dip into our funds, or tell us what to do with our funds. All such decisions are made by Fr. Borkowski in consultation with the Parish Council. The irony is that far from funding the Archdiocese, as stated above, we are actually being subsidized by our Novus Ordo colleagues, a situation which is really not fair in the long run.

It is safe to say that most of the members of our congregation would like to see the Tridentine indult expanded: Daily Mass, other sacraments available according to the Tridentine formulas, and so forth. The time has come to obtain your honest opinions on the actual demand for such things. If we had daily Mass, would you come? At what time of day? On what days per week? Don't tell us what you think we "want" to hear, tell us your honest thoughts. More trouble would arise from, say, offering a daily Mass that turned out to have virtually no attendance, than not to start it at all.

Impact of a Papal Motu Proprio

If, and it is a big if, the Holy Father broadens permission for the Tridentine Mass to be celebrated, then St. Josaphat will have to offer more than just the Mass to continue to attract people. We will no longer be the only game in town. Yes, we have a magnificent building and a uniquely talented music program, but we need to work on expanding the number of Tridentine-related activities offered by the parish.

First Community Meeting

We have recently received word from the Archdiocese about expansion of Tridentine permissions. As a result, Fr. Borkowski and members of the St. Josaphat Parish Council have decided that the time has come to hold our first Tridentine Community Town Hall Meeting, on Sunday, July 1, immediately after Mass in the Social Hall. Refreshments will be served. There is much to discuss, from the news from the Archdiocese, to the issues listed above, to other external matters.

This is your opportunity to offer your thoughts directly to our pastor, and through him, to the Archdiocese. We hope that you can set aside time to offer your input at this important stage of growth in the history of St. Josaphat Church.