

# Tridentine Community News

December 4, 2011 – Second Sunday of Advent

## *The Quandary of Personal Parishes – Part 1 of 3*

This week's announcement from the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council of the Archdiocese of Detroit recommending possible further parish closures, merging, and clustering raises a number of questions for discussion. Of primary interest to readers of this column was the following statement: "Sweetest Heart of Mary, St. Josaphat, and St Joseph should begin in February 2012 to develop a transition plan, to be submitted by June 2012, to eliminate 1 worship site and consolidate Mass schedules to conform to the archdiocesan policy of following Canon Law for a Priest to say no more than 3 Masses on a regular weekend." Without commenting on the pros and cons of making such a change, the particular rationale expressed is erroneous on two fronts:

1) Code of Canon Law Canon 905.2 states: "If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation." Thus, a priest is restricted to celebrating no more than three Masses per day, not per weekend. Think of the many parishes where a Saturday consists of a morning Mass, an afternoon wedding Mass, and an afternoon anticipated Sunday Mass. The same priest who celebrates three such Masses could not reasonably be expected not to celebrate a Mass the next day, Sunday, when multiple parish Masses might be scheduled.

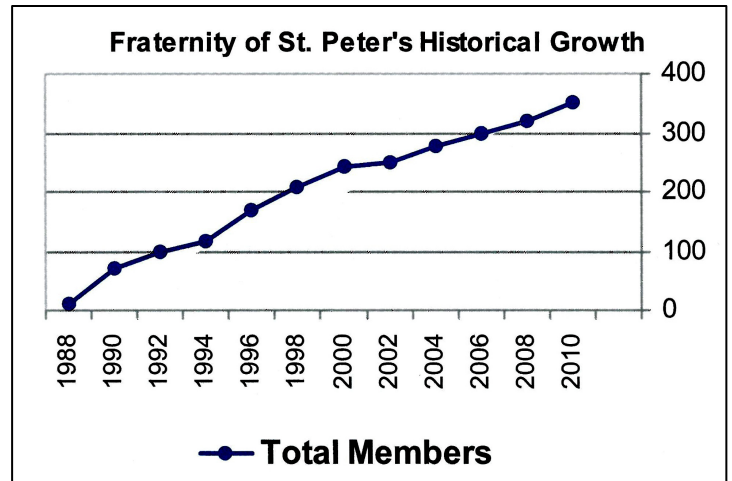
2) There is a presumption that the pastor of our cluster is celebrating more than three Masses per weekend. One look at our cluster schedule would inform a reader that unless there is a wedding, it is physically impossible for our pastor to celebrate more than three Masses in the cluster on a weekend, because of the timing of the Masses in our three churches. The APC does not seem to realize that other priests are regular celebrants of our Masses. Indeed, all but one of the Sunday Tridentine Masses since July 1, 2011, the arrival date of Fr. Darrell, have been celebrated by priests other than our pastor.

Since the APC has opened the possibility of closing one of our worship sites on the basis of a perception of a shortage of priests, it is relevant to bring up two related subjects that have been on many of our readers' minds for years: 1) The possibility of the Archdiocese of Detroit creating a Personal Parish for the Tridentine Mass, and 2) "Can the Fraternity of St. Peter help?"

### *Priests Are Available and Interested in Coming to the Archdiocese of Detroit*

Surely one of the most positive developments in the Church in our age is the rapid growth of priestly communities devoted to the Extraordinary Form of Holy Mass. Since 1988, when such communities began to be founded, the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP), the Institute of Christ the King (ICRSP), the Institute of the Good Shepherd, and assorted others throughout the world have been growing as fast as they can construct or acquire seminaries and houses of formation to accommodate the flood of vocations coming their way. They need to promote vocations

awareness about as much as the Super Bowl needs to advertise that tickets are on sale. The below chart from a recent FSSP mailing illustrates their staggering growth:



The FSSP is the fastest growing group. Others, like the ICRSP, intentionally restrict themselves to one seminary only, to give each seminarian exposure to the same instructors.

Since 2004, one formal and several informal discussions have been held between the Archdiocese of Detroit and the FSSP and ICRSP regarding sending a priest to help staff St. Josaphat. Both groups expressed interest, with the FSSP offering greater flexibility in options. While nothing came of the talks, the recent arrival of the SOLT order to assume responsibility for Detroit's Holy Redeemer Parish demonstrates a welcome new openness to accepting outside priests. This writer recalls hearing on the Dialogue TV show or in the Michigan Catholic newspaper a few years ago that an African bishop offered to send priests to Detroit from the surplus that his diocese enjoyed, but Cardinal Maida declined because of challenges of inculturation. Interestingly, Old St. Mary's Church now has an African pastor and has employed several African priests from the Holy Ghost Fathers over the years; inculturation is certainly possible. The point is that there are priests available to come to Detroit to make up for the shortage of diocesan clergy. Before taking as serious an action as closing a church, the Archdiocese would seem to be best served by exploring thoroughly the option of bringing in priests who are interested in coming here. Over the next two weeks, we will discuss the pros and cons of involving one of these groups of priests with the St. Josaphat Tridentine Community, and possibly the broader regional Extraordinary Form Mass scene.

### *Tridentine Masses This Coming Week*

Mon. 12/05 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Feria of Advent)  
Tue. 12/06 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (St. Nicholas, Bishop & Confessor)  
Thu. 12/08 7:00 PM: High Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Immaculate Conception – Holy Day of Obligation in the U.S.)  
Sun. 12/04 12:15 PM: High Mass at *Ss. Peter & Paul (west side)* (Third Sunday of Advent – *Gaudete* Sunday)