

Tridentine Community News

March 11, 2012 – Third Sunday of Lent

The Stational Churches of Rome

You may have noticed in liturgical calendars or in hand missals that every day in Lent and the Octave of Easter is assigned a “station”, a church in Rome. For example, the church assigned to the Third Sunday of Lent is St. Lawrence Outside the Walls.

In the first centuries of the Church, the Bishop’s liturgy was considered the most significant in the diocese. The Bishop made his way to each of the stational churches on the set days. After evolving over preceding centuries, a standardized list of Rome’s stational churches was published by Pope St. Gregory the Great in the sixth century. In the ninth century, Pope Leo III expanded the list to comprise 94 churches in all, spread over 92 days, though the ones designated for Lent and Easter remain the best-known.

Today, the stational churches present an opportunity for a Lenten pilgrimage. On its designated day, each stational church offers a procession, praying of the Litany of the Saints, and veneration of relics. While we are not aware of a published listing of the times of these services, the Pontifical North American College [Seminary] in Rome offers Mass in English at each of the stational churches each morning; a schedule is published at: <http://www.pnac.org/station-churches/the-roman-station-liturgy/>

The Church enriches pilgrimages to the stational churches as follows: “...a plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful who assist in the sacred functions held in any stational church on its designated day; if they merely visit the church devoutly, the indulgence will be partial.” [Excerpt from the 2006 Manual of Indulgences]

For people in our era, the stational churches remind us of how many significant and truly historic churches there are in the Eternal City. The depth and commitment of our ancestors’ faith and the Communion of the Saints are made vivid when one participates in ancient devotions and customs in these edifices.

The tradition is explained in detail in a book entitled, fittingly enough, “The Stational Churches of Rome”, by Fr. Frank Phillips, C.R., and available at www.birettabooks.com.

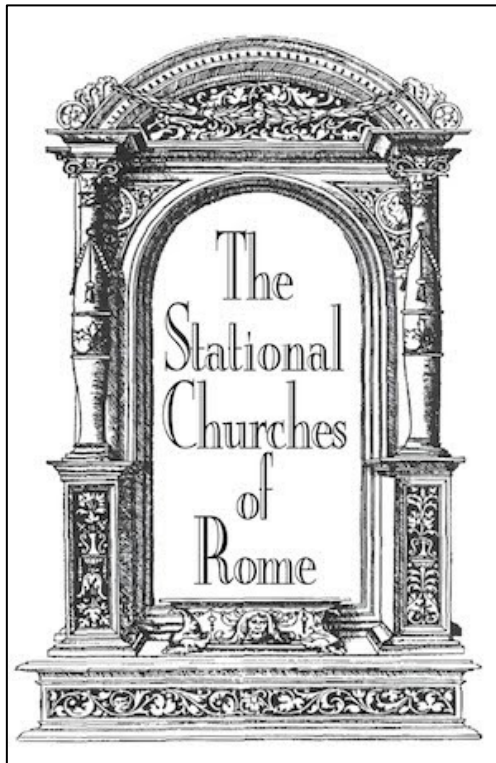
The complete list of stational churches, with photos, is available at: <http://www.frcoulter.com/pics/station-churches/index.html>

St. Stephen Church Reinstalls Communion Rail

In an update to our report on local Tridentine Masses from our February 19 column, we are pleased to report that St. Stephen Parish in New Boston, Michigan, near Detroit Metro Airport,

continues to hold Extraordinary Form Masses several times per month. The designation of which Holy Masses are Tridentine is not posted on their web site or in their parish bulletin, so one must call the parish to learn the schedule.

In a parallel and encouraging development, St. Stephen has installed a new Communion Rail in its historic church. The original Communion Rail had been removed decades ago. This is the second local parish which has undertaken such an effort: A few years ago, Ann Arbor’s Old St. Patrick Church installed a Communion Rail in preparation for the introduction of Extraordinary Form Masses at the parish.



This is a growing trend. It goes without saying that churches being built primarily for the Tridentine Mass, such as those administered by the Fraternity of St. Peter, incorporate Communion Rails. More significantly, some new churches built primarily for the Ordinary Form of Holy Mass are also including Altar Rails. Examples include the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in La Crosse, Wisconsin; Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California; and the Fathers of Mercy Chapel of Divine Mercy in Auburn, Kentucky. The first two of these regularly host the Extraordinary Form.

Summorum Pontificum permits any priest and church to hold Mass in the Extraordinary Form. Because of this new legislation, the pastorally sensitive approach when planning new churches or renovations is to include a Communion Rail, a component central to the rubrics of the Extraordinary Form. Further, Pope Benedict XVI’s example of distributing

Holy Communion only while kneeling is a reminder of the merits of that approach in the Ordinary Form. The rail has a practical purpose, to facilitate the devotional kneeling posture, as well as a theological purpose, to demarcate the sanctuary where sacred actions take place from the more profane rest of the church. Another element of our Catholic tradition is on the road to restoration.

Special High Mass for St. Joseph Day

A reminder that Mass on Monday, March 19 will be at the special time and place of 6:00 PM at St. Joseph Church for the Feast of St. Joseph, rather than at St. Josaphat.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 03/12 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Feria of Lent)
Tue. 03/13 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (Feria of Lent)

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail info@windsorlatinmass.org. Previous columns are available at www.windsorlatinmass.org