

Tridentine Community News

August 11, 2013 – Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Tridentine Travelogue: A Visit to EWTN and the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament – Part 2 of 2

A rapidly growing EWTN wasn't the only project that Mother Angelica had to oversee over the past 30 years. Her order of nuns, the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, was also growing. In 1993, she returned her nuns to usage of the full, traditional habit, a symbolic act which spoke to the hearts of many young women and, in conjunction with the order's traditional life of prayer, penance, and adoration, helped to attract many new vocations.

In 1995, as EWTN was taking over more of the property of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Irondale, Alabama, it became increasingly apparent that the nuns needed a larger home, one more conducive to the cloistered life which was their order's original charter. Mother received a locution from the Divine Child that she was to build a shrine in honor of the True Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. But where? And how?

Such challenges were not daunting to the feisty sister who started EWTN with \$200 cash and one satellite dish purchased on credit. Appropriate property was located in rural Hanceville, Alabama, approximately 60 miles north of EWTN. Five generous families stepped forward to pay the entire \$50 million cost of purchasing the land and constructing one of the most impressive Catholic monasteries in existence; no money was taken from EWTN.

After a long drive north on I-65, the visitor drives another 20 minutes down country roads until a white picket fence appears on both sides of the road. Immaculately groomed lawns roll off the sides of the road as far as the eye can see. As one drives down the twisting road, in the distance the new Our Lady of the Angels Monastery appears. The Romanesque Shrine [Church] of the Blessed Sacrament is the centerpiece of the grounds. It was built to accommodate both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of Holy Mass. The liturgical consultant and design firm was the well-known Granda Liturgical Arts, which supplies artwork and design services for traditional church projects worldwide.



Built to accommodate crowds, there is a large parking lot, an area for tour buses to park, and an amusement park-like maze for

crowds to line up to gain entry to the property. Though these features are presumably useful for major events and pilgrimages, on the weekday this writer visited, only a handful of people were visiting the property.

While the nuns don't work at EWTN any longer, they continue to pray for the network and have a close affiliation with it. The upper level of the Shrine is familiar to EWTN viewers as the site of the weekly Benediction services and the periodic Tridentine Masses the network has broadcast. It is a prime example of a beautiful new church built in a classic style: there are side altars, a Communion rail, and traditional wooden confessionals. A massive monstrance containing the exposed Blessed Sacrament resides in an elevated niche for adoration during the day. The nuns assist at Mass and the Divine Office from behind a grille on the right side of the sanctuary. On the lower level of the shrine is a Crypt Church, also traditional in design. The back wall of the Crypt Church contains crypts for deceased nuns of the order.



Across the piazza from the church is the Castel San Miguel, a castle-like building containing a gift shop, conference room, and dining facility for visiting groups. A number of bed-and-breakfasts have opened up just outside the Shrine property, although we caution readers that there is virtually nothing in the immediate area apart from the Shrine.

Information about visiting the Shrine, along with a calendar of events and liturgies, is available at both www.ewtn.com and on the Shrine's own web site, www.olamshrine.com.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 08/12 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (St. Clare, Virgin)

Tue. 08/13 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (Daily Mass for the Dead)

Thu. 08/15 7:00 PM: High Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Thu. 08/15 7:00 PM: High Mass at *Assumption Grotto* (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary)