

Tridentine Community News

September 29, 2013 – Dedication of St. Michael the Archangel

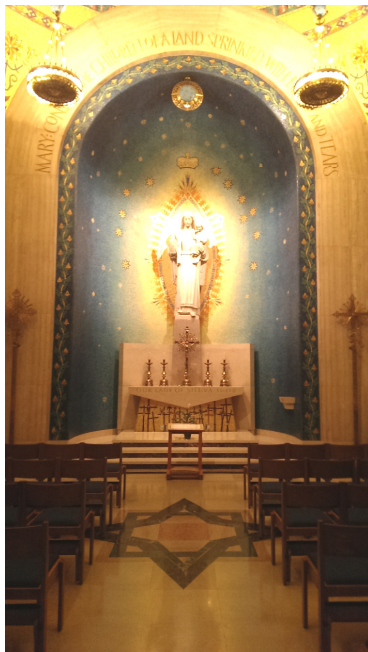
Tridentine Travelogue: The National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, DC



Few churches in the world can truly be classified as “important.” On this continent, one of those is undoubtedly the Basilica & National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, located on the campus of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. The largest church in North America, the National Shrine is a two-level building. The lower “crypt” level was completed in 1926 and consists of the Crypt Chapel, a low-ceilinged church with superb acoustics and a particularly crisp-sounding pipe organ; a catacomb-like central area ringed with side chapels;

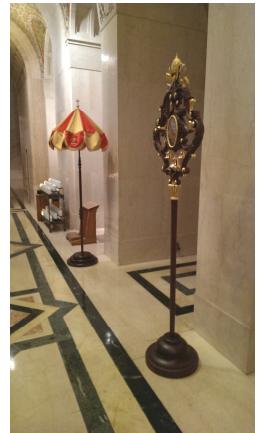
and a cafeteria and gift shop. Upstairs is the Great Upper Church, completed in 1959 and one of the last sizable churches built in the classic Borromean style.

It is this pinnacle of 1959 style which makes the church so important. A pre-Vatican II church, it is remarkable how much of it remains historically intact. As the adjacent photo of one of the side chapels indicates, many chapels are configured for *ad orientem* [only] celebration of the Mass. Surrounding the baldacchino-surmounted High Altar are three alcoves of side altars [see photo at right]. These are clearly intended for celebration of private Masses by groups of visiting priests, much like the side altars at Rome’s St. Peter’s Basilica are used. Mosaics are an integral part of the design, both in the side chapels and in the elaborately decorated domes. English, and not Latin, is the predominant language used in the artistic inscriptions, which is interesting considering that in 1959, Latin was still universally employed in the Latin Rite liturgy.



The Knights of Columbus have been major patrons of the National Shrine, having paid for dome decoration in recent years, and the construction of the bell tower decades ago.

The *ombrellino* and *tintinnabulum* (bell) found in all basilicas are located in a side hallway. They may be carried in procession on certain solemn occasions.



For many years after Vatican II, the Crypt Church held a weekly Sunday Latin Mass in the Ordinary Form. Around the time that a Latin Mass in the Ordinary Form debuted at Washington’s St. Matthew Cathedral, the Mass at the Shrine was dropped. There is a thriving Tridentine Mass scene in the region, from the big name-attended Mass at St. Mary, Mother of God in downtown DC, to the glorious St. Alphonsus Church in downtown Baltimore, to the nearby Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, which has the highest percentage of churches offering the Extraordinary Form in the U.S. As a result, there seems to be little leftover demand for Tridentine Masses at the National Shrine, though one of the best-attended special event Masses ever was held there in 2010, celebrated by Bishop Edward Slattery of Tulsa, Oklahoma. While there is no published schedule of regular Tridentine Masses at the National Shrine, it has been reported that pilgrim groups are welcome to celebrate them by prearrangement. Some have reported occasional Masses on Wednesdays at 11:10 AM in the Lourdes Chapel outside the Crypt Church.



Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Mon. 09/30 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (St. Jerome, Priest, Confessor, & Doctor)

Tue. 10/01 7:00 PM: Low Requiem Mass at *Assumption-Windsor* (Daily Mass for the Dead)

Fri. 10/04 7:00 PM: Low Mass at *St. Josaphat* (Sacred Heart of Jesus)

Sat. 10/05 9:00 AM: Low Mass at *St. Hyacinth, Detroit* (Immaculate Heart of Mary) – First Saturday Mass with Confessions before Mass and Rosary after Mass