

Tridentine Community News

October 3, 2021 – External Solemnity of Our Lady of the Rosary

The City of St. Jude

Montgomery, Alabama is known for its role as an epicenter of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Not so well-known is a pioneering Catholic complex there which endures to this day.



Founder Fr. Harold Purcell founded the first Catholic ministry for African Americans in Alabama in 1934. Conducting a national fundraising effort, he acquired a 56 acre property and began the development of the City of St. Jude, resembling a college campus, which includes:



- A high school, the St. Jude Educational Institute [photo by Chris Pruitt]

- A home for developmentally disabled children (the Father Purcell Memorial

Exceptional Children's Center) and associated convent

- A two-story social center and museum

- A hospital [photo by Chris Pruitt]

- A school-sized two-story rectory

- A church, noted for its tutorial stained glass



Today the property is underutilized. The hospital closed in 1985 and was converted into senior citizen apartments. The high school closed in 2014 and is currently occupied by the Life Academy, a K-8 school. The children's home still operates, though the convent is empty. The parish church is still open and but could stand some TLC, as the congregation it serves is small.

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



Into this mix Mobile, Alabama Archbishop Thomas Rodi recently assigned as Pastor Fr. Andrew Jones, last featured in this column as learning to celebrate the Traditional Latin Mass at St. Michael Parish in Auburn. Fr. Jones is still getting his bearings but notes that the church at St. Jude is one of few in the Archdiocese to have escaped wreckovation. It still sports a



High Altar, four Side Altars, and a choir loft. With no other churches offering the Extraordinary Form is central Montgomery, and this church offering all the essential architectural features while also needing rejuvenation, St. Jude is a textbook example of an historic church that could find new life were it to add the TLM to its schedule. Indeed, Fr. Jones recently hosted a celebrant training session there in conjunction with Extraordinary Faith.

Ironically given the sensibilities of the current age, Fr. Jones believes a facility such as the City of St. Jude could never be built today, as political and regulatory norms, not to mention budgetary limitations, would prevent such a comprehensive complex from finding the necessary support.

Further information may be found at www.cityofstjude.org and in the biographical book, *Build Me a City: The Life of Reverend Harold Purcell* by Sr. Mary Ruth Coffman, OSB.

Tridentine Masses This Coming Week

Sun. 10/10 1:00 PM: High Mass at *Oakland County Latin Mass Association/Orchard Lake Shrine Chapel of St. John Paul II* (Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost) – Special time this week only, to accommodate a school Mass in the chapel in the morning.