

Tridentine Community News

August 6, 2023 – Transfiguration

The Legacy of Ted Marier



The October 25, 2020 edition of this column described the legacy of the late Dr. Theodore Marier, founder of the St. Paul Choir School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the recent Sacred Music Symposium in Costa Mesa, California, music director of Boston's Cathedral of the Holy Cross Richard Clark delivered a fascinating lecture about Ted entitled "Theodore Marier Is the Most Important Liturgical Musician — Even Today".

Clark's talk makes the same central point that this column has many times asserted: The St. Paul Choir

School is perhaps the epitome of what liturgy could have become following the Second Vatican Council: They employ both Latin and English Gregorian Chant, extensive use of sacred polyphony, and a fully chanted (Novus Ordo) Mass Ordinary. This writer was moved to revert to Catholicism because of the impressive Masses offered by the Choir School. To this day – and with full understanding that this may seem like an extreme statement to readers of this column – the quality of the sacred music at St. Paul Parish is unsurpassed, matched only by similar efforts at St. James Spanish Place and the Brompton Oratory, both in London, England. If most Novus Ordo Masses were like this, there would be significantly lower demand for the Traditional Mass.

Clark's presentation covers the history of America's only full-time Catholic boys' choir school and the significance of Ted's compositions, with a focus on his English chant settings of the Responsorial Psalms. A project is underway to update Ted's musical settings to fit the new translations of those psalms.

An article about the lecture, and a link to a YouTube video of it, may be found here:

<https://www.ccwatershed.org/2023/07/26/theodore-marier-is-the-most-important-liturgical-musician-even-today/>

Common Misunderstandings Regarding Indulgences

Recently there have been some questions about rules for gaining Plenary Indulgences. One reader asked about the so-called Portiuncula Indulgence, named after the chapel of St. Francis of Assisi, which grants a Plenary Indulgence to those who visit a parish church on August 2 and there pray an Our Father and a Creed. The reader forwarded an e-mail stating that the indulgence could also be gained from noon onwards on August 1. This assertion is not backed up by evidence.

It is possible that such misconceptions stem from a confusion about which set of rules for indulgences is in force. It is not well-known that in 1967, the entire governing rules for indulgences

were changed. Pre-1967 books of indulgenced prayers, such as the *Raccolta*, are no longer in force. The currently in-force indulgences are those published in the 2004 *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum* (Latin edition available here: <https://www.vaticanum.com/en/enchiridion-indulgentiarum-normae-et-concessionoes-reimpressio-2004>) and its English translation, the 2006 *Manual of Indulgences* (available here: <https://www.amazon.com/Manual-Indulgences-Conference-Catholic-Bishops/dp/1574554743>).

Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom, and he can change the locks. Our oft-stated analogy that indulgences are heaven's frequent flyer miles is quite apt in this situation: One may fondly recall some special mileage promotion from the past – for example circa 2001 Radisson Hotels offered a very generous 5,000 United miles per stay – but those bonuses come and go. Only currently in-force bonuses actually work.

Occasionally someone will assert that one can gain a Plenary Indulgence by attending the so-called "First Mass" of a newly ordained priest, multiple times per year, seemingly whenever he offers a Mass for the first time at a new church. That is false – the rules for the indulgence are clear that it can only be gained at the priest's actual first Mass after ordination.

Also worth noting is that it is attendance at that First Mass that qualifies for the indulgence; receiving the blessing of a recently ordained priest [First Blessing of recently ordained Fr. Michael Selvaraj of the Archdiocese of Detroit pictured], while a pious tradition, does not gain an indulgence.



Interestingly, we have heard from two priests that they were able to request and receive permission from Rome to grant this "First Mass" indulgence for a few additional Masses past the actual first one. However, this is an exception to the rule, and if a priest maintains one can gain an indulgence for those additional Masses, the burden of proof that he obtained the requisite permission is on him.

Disposing of Old Blessed Objects

Traditionally old blessed objects are not discarded in the trash but are rather buried or burned. A volunteer has offered to perform the proper disposal of such objects. Please bring any old blessed objects you wish to dispose of to Mass next Sunday, August 13, at both the Oakland County Latin Mass Association Mass at Orchard Lake Shrine Chapel, and at the St. Benedict Tridentine Community Mass at St. Alphonsus Church in Windsor. Our volunteer will see to it that they are provided the appropriate means of disposal.

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