

# Tridentine Community News

May 12, 2024 – Sunday After the Ascension

## *The Importance of Offering the TLM in “Ugly Churches”*

This column has several times made mention of Miami Latin Mass organizer Frank Andollo. Frank is one of the key people behind the explosive growth of the Miami TLM community, and most notably, the various special occasion Masses it has offered in churches throughout metro Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Frank was among the young adults interviewed in Episode 7 of *Extraordinary Faith*.

Shortly before Covid, Frank happened to be in Detroit on business. He and this author toured some of our historic churches and concluded the day with coffee and cookies at a café in the Fisher Building. Over those snacks, and noting that he doesn't have as many beautiful edifices available to him, Frank made a memorable comment about the importance of making the Traditional Mass available in “ugly churches.”

Recently asked for clarification and expansion on this subject, Frank provided the following detailed reply:

“I don't know if it is correct to say uglier churches are where the TLM will less likely be experienced. My experience heavily biases this opinion because, unfortunately, most Churches in the Archdiocese of Miami are ugly, flying saucer designs. Some of these flying saucer parishes are as fabulously wealthy as they are ugly..., while Gesu [Ed.: Miami's most architecturally elaborate church, pictured below] is one of the poorest, but offers daily confessions and interior beauty.



In my 11 years of experience organizing TLMs and seeing them all over the world in a variety of venues I have found that the most beautiful sacred spaces are the ones where TLM will be most successful, given that the liturgy looks more at home and will connect better with the Catholic patrimony with which the laity may be aware of to varying degrees, but not necessarily familiar. Bringing the TLM to those spaces will connect fuzzy memories a layperson may have of any combination of the deposit of faith, chant/polyphony, religious paintings, European cathedrals, stained glass, iconography, vestments, and unite it all, at least temporarily under one roof.



*Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Miami*

To be clear, I am in favor of bringing the TLM anywhere and everywhere that will have it, as long as it is being done well. People, including clergy, accustomed to ugly sacred spaces have been numbed to the effect transcendent beauty can have to nourish their souls. If the place we dedicate to worshipping God is ugly then what does that say about God? Nonetheless, I have seen the ugliest chapels in Miami transformed when the altar and what can only loosely be defined as the sanctuary are set up for TLM with all of the accidents of the liturgy that we implement, and suddenly felt the stirring in my soul (which I already knew intellectually), ‘this is where the Lord lives.’ I have gotten feedback from local worshippers who had no idea that their church could be used in that manner. The downside to all of that is that for the organizers usually it is a heavier lift to set up an ugly church for TLM and then to be sure you have to put everything back the way it was.”

As a footnote, it's worth adding that our experience in metro Detroit and Windsor has been a little different. Unlike Miami, we have a plethora of beautiful historic churches. Tridentine Masses have been offered in most of them, either on a regular or special occasion basis. The faithful in this region do like historic churches, especially when the TLM is offered there for the first time. However as the novelty wears off, it has become apparent that a convenient location is more important to most people than a beautiful church. For example, TLMs offered at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Plymouth and at St. Edward on the Lake in Lakeport, two churches that are not particularly noted for their beauty, have been successful and well-attended over the long term. TLMs offered at St. Hyacinth and St. Albertus Churches in Detroit, however, have not been well attended, despite those being two of the most lovely traditionally-outfitted churches in the area. They're simply in bad neighborhoods, and that puts people off.

## *Tridentine Masses This Coming Week*

Sun. 05/19: No Mass at *OCLMA/Orchard Lake Shrine Chapel* – The school needs the chapel that day.

Sun. 05/19 10:00 AM: High Mass at *Old St. Mary's* (Pentecost Sunday) – Celebrant: Msgr. Ronald Browne