

Tridentine Community News

April 4, 2010

Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos To Celebrate Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

On Saturday, April 24 at 1:00 PM, Dario Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos, the former President of the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, will celebrate Mass in the Extraordinary Form at the High Altar of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. The stated occasion is the fifth anniversary of the election of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI.

This will be the first time in over 40 years that the Tridentine Mass will have been celebrated in the main upper church of the National Shrine. It will also be the first time in a long while that the high altar will have been used for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The National Shrine is the largest Catholic Church in the United States and one of the largest in the world. It is comprised of the Great Upper Church plus a basement Crypt Church. For many years, the Crypt Church hosted a Sunday *Novus Ordo* Latin Mass. That Mass has since been discontinued, but the Crypt Church has hosted the occasional Extraordinary Form special event. It was also once the site of a Latin Liturgy Association National Convention.

The Upper Church is somewhat of a larger version of New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral. Surrounding both the upper church and the lower level are numerous chapels, varying from traditional design with wall-mounted altars, to abstract, contemporary designs. The building is so vast that it includes its own cafeteria.

The high altar (photo from the National Shrine web site, www.nationalshrine.com) is set deep back in the sanctuary and is surmounted by a massive baldacchino. In front of this majestic altar, a gargantuan sanctuary was constructed to accommodate Pontifical Solemn Masses involving an army of sacred ministers. In recent decades, a rather pedestrian freestanding altar has stood at the front of this open space and serves as the Altar of Sacrifice, despite the fact that the high altar can accommodate celebration of the Mass on both sides.

Let us recall the purpose of a baldacchino: To veil the Sacred Mysteries taking place beneath it, much as the iconostasis (wall) veils the Holy Table behind it in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy. It is a beautiful reminder that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass brings God the Son down to our mundane world.

Fortunately, this glorious altar and baldacchino, the focal points of the whole church, will soon be put back to their intended purposes, and for the form of Holy Mass for which they were built.

An intrepid organization, The Paulus Institute, was formed in 2007 to promote liturgical beauty in the DC area. They invited Cardinal Castrillón, secured the use of the National Shrine (how they accomplished *that* would be a fascinating story to hear), and

recruited members of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter to coordinate the complex Pontifical ceremonies. No doubt they are hoping to fill the church as the late Alfons Cardinal Stickler's Extraordinary Form Mass filled St. Patrick's Cathedral in 1996.

The event is so newsworthy that EWTN will be broadcasting the Mass live. Special Tridentine Masses on EWTN have become a regular occurrence, as you may have noted.



If any of our readers will be attending this Mass, we would appreciate photos and a first-hand account.

*The *Ite, Missa Est* for Masses XVII and XVIII*

A reader of this column asked why so few books include the music for the *Ite, Missa Est* for Gregorian Chant Masses XVII and XVIII. These are the two Mass settings specified for Lent and Advent. The reason is that prior to 1960, in Lent and Advent, the *Ite* was replaced at the end of Mass by *Benedicámus Dómino*. The 1960 revision ordered that *Benedicámus* only be used when a procession follows Mass, such as on Corpus Christi. Prior to this date, there had been no need for an *Ite* in the Lent and Advent Mass settings.

An allied question is why this *Ite*, which is common for Masses XVII and XVIII as well as for the infrequently used XVI, does not mirror the melody of the Kyrie of those settings. The *Ite's* of other Gregorian Mass settings do employ the melody of the Kyrie of their respective settings. The answer is that this is actually the *Ite* of Mass XV; it mirrors Kyrie XV. It is also a more austere and simple *Ite*, appropriate for Lent.

As modern publications, the Blue Hymnals in use at Assumption-Windsor and St. Josaphat do include this *Ite* at the conclusion of the Mass settings.