

Tridentine Community News

October 1, 2006

C.I.E.L. 2006 Conference Report

The city of Oxford, England was the setting for the world's principal international academic conference concerning the Traditional Roman Liturgy. CIEL 2006 was held at Merton College, one of the residential colleges at Oxford University, approximately fifty miles northwest of London. Attendees had the interesting option of staying in historic student rooms at Merton, some of which were only accessible via narrow, winding staircases.

Among the over 160 attendees were Dr. Mary Berry, a British chant expert who trained many of today's best known teachers of chant; Fr. Uwe Michael Lang, a priest from the London Oratory and author of the book, *Turning Towards The Lord*, which advocates a return to celebrating Holy Mass *ad orientem* and carries a foreword by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger; Fr. Thomas Kocik, Massachusetts-based author of *Reform of the Reform?*, a book presenting varying viewpoints on the post-Vatican II liturgical changes; Dr. Lauren Pristas, Caldwell College (New Jersey) Professor of Theology and author of studies comparing Tridentine and Novus Ordo Collect prayers; the Monsignor secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio to Britain; and over 30 priests and religious from various continents. Some of those priests were new to the Tridentine world and were there to experience the Classical Roman Rite for the first time.

Metropolitan Detroit and Windsor were represented by Brother John Berchmanns of the Canons Regular of the New Jerusalem, originally from St. Michael's, along with this author.

Speakers

Talks were given in the Examination Schools building, with grand marble staircases leading to lecture halls adorned with giant oil paintings of Oxford leaders of old; and in the Sheldonian Theatre, a semicircular, multi-purpose lecture and concert hall in the middle of the Oxford campus. This was an entirely appropriate setting for a gathering that had a more academic bent than the more practically-oriented Latin Liturgy Association conventions here in North America. Speeches were given in a variety of languages (always with English translations provided), on topics including whether the directives of the Vatican II document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were truly followed; a discussion of Liturgical Poetry and Hymnody; and a study of how the Roman Calendar developed.

Liturgies

Liturgical Director was the renowned academic (and transitional deacon) Dr. Alcuin Reid. Best known for his updating of the Tridentine rubrics guidebook, *Ceremonies of the Roman Rite*, originally authored by Fr. Adrian Fortescue, Dr. Reid has written a number of other



books on liturgical topics. Arguably the world's top expert in

Tridentine ceremonies, Reid assembled a program of daily Lauds (morning prayer), Vespers (afternoon prayer), and Compline (evening prayer), as well as daily Solemn High Mass. Numerous priests, religious, and seminarians, from the FSSP and elsewhere, assisted at the liturgies.

The Music Director was young organ prodigy Andrew Knowles, organist at the Oxford Oratory (sister church to the London Oratory). Andrew played the crisp, baroque Walker organ at the rear of the chapel. At one Vespers service, another organist played



the chamber organ at the front near the sanctuary to accompany the sung antiphons. Similarly, there were two choirs: One to chant the Propers and Ordinary, positioned at a music stand in the middle of the nave in the midst of the congregation; and a second in the organ loft to

accompany the Ordinary and Hymns. The former choir was composed of French and Australian members, all of whom were choir directors in their home parishes. Watching them sing in perfect unison in such close proximity could not fail to give the hearer greater appreciation for the art of chant.



Each day, a Solemn High Mass was offered. On Saturday, September 16, a Pontifical High Mass was offered by Auxiliary Bishop David McGough of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. It was His Excellency's first time celebrating Mass in the

Tridentine Rite, yet he availed himself respectably. The Mass was videotaped and will be made available for purchase soon.

Meals were taken in the Merton College Dining Hall along long tables again reminiscent of the Harry Potter movies. As happens at all Latin Mass conventions, interesting anecdotes were exchanged. For instance, one British pastor introduced kneeling to receive Holy Communion at a parish which had no communion rail. Soon he realized that quite apart from its "veiling the sacred" role, he needed to install an altar rail simply to give the unsteady and elderly something to lean upon while awaiting the arrival of the minister of Communion. Now there's an idea: ADA Compliance being reason to reinstall communion rails!

Attending CIEL demonstrated how we in the Tridentine Mass movement are connected to others of like mind and experience worldwide. It is an experience of the Universal Church that most Catholics rarely if ever experience, and it inspires one to work for excellence at home. Additional commentary and photographs of CIEL have been put up by an occasional visitor to St. Josaphat at: <http://cornell-catholic-circle.blogspot.com/2006/09/ciel-2006-oxford-pontifical-high-mass.html>

Questions? Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail tridnews@stjosaphatchurch.org with your thoughts.