

Tridentine Community News

December 3, 2006

Ad Multos Annos, Fr. Lefaive

Today marks the end of an era: One of Metropolitan Detroit's staunchest advocates of the Tridentine Mass, Fr. Ulysse A. Lefaive, today concludes his tenure as regular celebrant of the Traditional Mass in Windsor.



Fr. Lefaive began serving the Windsor Tridentine Mass Community during a low point: The Mass was held in the humble chapel of the Villa Maria Nursing Home. Shortly after he started, the SARS epidemic broke out; you could not enter the nursing home without signing a form declaring that you had not been in contact with SARS patients, or even traveled to Toronto or

the Far East, where breakouts had occurred. Even more humiliating, you had to be sprayed with a disinfectant before being allowed into the building. Understandably, attendance plummeted to barely 15 people, but Fr. Lefaive urged the community to continue on. Even when his own health wasn't the best, he set an example for the rest of us by soldiering on. In over five years of working with Fr. Lefaive, this author cannot recall a single complaint coming out of the man's mouth.

This holy and humble priest came from an era when classes at London's St. Peter Seminary were taught in Latin. You read that right: The classes themselves were conducted in Latin; unimaginable in our day. The Latin language and love for the traditional liturgy are in his bloodstream. As pastor of Windsor's historic St. Alphonsus Church, Fr. Lefaive resisted pressure to rearrange the interior of the church after Vatican II. Thanks to his foresight, today, St. Alphonsus stands as one of downtown Windsor's architectural jewels, its ornate altars, oil paintings, and stencilwork stunning in an era of forgettable modernization jobs elsewhere.

Fr. Lefaive took his love for Holy Tradition across the border, as well. As a member of a "priest's club" in Detroit, he promoted the Tridentine Mass to fellow clergy on both sides of the border and softened some obstinate hearts in the process.

Fr. Lefaive will be impossible to replace. For the interim, St. Michael's will make use of a rotation of celebrants much like St. Josaphat does.

Requiescat in Pace, Murray J. Harris

One of the founders of the Windsor Indult Mass and its longtime Treasurer, Murray Harris passed away on November 20, 2006. Fittingly, a Tridentine Requiem Mass was celebrated on Saturday, November 25 by Fr. Edmond Bourque at St. Michael Church.



Over the years, Murray helped out in just about every way imaginable, ranging from sacristan to usher. Perhaps his most memorable effort was learning how to use a computer, and the esoteric Quark Xpress software, no less, to produce the original weekly Worship Aid handouts.

As this column has mentioned before, in large part, the Tridentine Mass movement is a people story. Volunteers diligently working behind the scenes have contributed just as much as the clergy to create Indult Mass communities throughout the world. As one Indult community begets another, as arguably happened here when Detroit developed out of Windsor, it is appropriate to remember the work of those responsible for making it all happen. This is all the more noteworthy when we realize that when Windsor began in 1991, Tridentine Masses were few and far between. It took brave and well organized souls to successfully obtain permission for an Indult Mass from a bishop, when precedents were few. Murray was one of those pioneers.

Requiem ætérnam dona ei Dómine, et lux perpétua lucéat ei.

Pro Multis

It appears that the lengthy controversy over the translation of "pro multis" in the Eucharistic Prayers of the Novus Ordo Mass is finally over. Pope Benedict XVI has ordered that all translations of the Holy Mass must henceforth accurately translate the words as "for many" rather than "for all". Certain other (non-English) vernacular translations already properly translate this phrase as "for many", but the English version suffered from the International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL's) hasty and inaccurate translation job. Our Lord never said that "everyone" was to be saved. One must follow His teachings in thought, word, and deed in order to save one's soul. Therefore, "many" may be saved if they live as he taught, but certainly not "all." Universal salvation was never promised.

Tridentine hand missals have always used their own, more literal translations. As a result, a typical Tridentine missal's English is more accurate and more poetic than the typical ICEL text. Our Novus Ordo brethren have not been so fortunate.

Apart from the immediate papal order on "pro multis", the Vatican's "Vox Clara Commission" has been at work for several years preparing more faithful-to-the-Latin translations of the Ordinary and Propers of the Novus Ordo Mass. After review and editing by National Bishops' Conferences, and ratification by the Holy See, this process promises to provide improved, if not fully accurate, English translations. Apparently the U.S. bishops have already approved "Credo [in unum Deum]" becoming "I believe" instead of "we believe", and "Et cum spírítu tuo" becoming "And with your spirit".

Because of our Holy Father's action, a subtle yet crucial point of Catholic theology will now be made clearer. Let us pray that other corrections to present inaccurate and banal translations will also be made in the near future.