

Tridentine Community News

December 30, 2007

2007 in Review

At the risk of sounding like the year-end issue of a supermarket tabloid, we just have to say – What a year it's been! It is absolutely stunning how the anticipation of, and results from, Pope Benedict XVI's Motu Proprio, *Summórum Pontificum*, have affected those of us in the Tridentine trenches. Let's recap:

There is no question that there has been a refreshing change in attitude in the Archdiocese of Detroit. To their credit, even if they are not particularly fond of the Classic Form of the Liturgy, many diocesan leaders have seen the way the Roman wind is blowing. They have displayed concern for St. Josaphat that this writer never expected to see. Auxiliary Bishop Earl Boyea has even arranged his schedule to celebrate Mass at St. Josaphat approximately once per quarter, no small feat for someone whose Sundays are chock-full of appointments and obligations to visit countless parishes.

Apart from St. Josaphat, 21 other parishes in our region have either started or are exploring starting Tridentine Masses of their own, proving that there has been latent demand for this liturgy.

In Windsor, we experienced two blessings in disguise. First, after a panicky few weeks scrambling to find celebrants for our Mass when our longtime chaplain retired, we found a priest who has not only come to deeply appreciate the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, but has also shown great dedication to learning the rubrics and the chant. 2007 ended with that priest, Fr. Peter Hrytsyk, celebrating the Christmas Midnight Mass across the river at St. Joseph, the third parish in our region to begin a Tridentine Mass.

Our joy was at finding such an ideal celebrant was tempered by a change in parish policy at St. Michael Church that made it difficult to continue the Mass there. Little did we know at the time that this was apparently God's way of nudging us and the Diocese of London, Ontario to relocate our Mass to the most beautiful and historic church in Windsor, Assumption Church.

Sacramental activity has increased: Our core group of three churches has already witnessed Baptisms, Funerals, and one Wedding according to the Extraordinary Form. Next up: Confession in the Classic Form.

At the international level, the year started out on a fine note with the publication of *Sacraméntum Caritátis*, Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical stressing reverence in worship, proper adherence to rubrics, and use of Latin and chant. Two parishes in Detroit added Latin to their Novus Ordo Masses in response to this document.

July 7 saw the publication of the long-awaited Motu Proprio that gives any priest the right to celebrate the Tridentine Mass and Classic Form Sacraments. Although its effective date was not until September 14, arrangements for new Extraordinary Form Masses began worldwide almost immediately.

EWTN stepped right up to the plate and offered its first live Tridentine Mass on September 14, celebrated by Fr. Josef Bisig, founder of the Fraternity of St. Peter. No stranger to our region, a

few weeks after this historic broadcast, Fr. Bisig came to Michigan to celebrate the Solemn High Anniversary Mass for our sister Tridentine Community in Flint. Music for that Mass was provided by a joint Assumption-St. Josaphat Choir. EWTN broadcast a second live Extraordinary Form Mass on December 15, and has promised to do more on a regular basis.

Another long-awaited move was made when Pope Benedict replaced longtime Papal Master of Ceremonies Archbishop Piero Marini with Msgr. Guido Marini (no relation). The latter shares our Holy Father's desire for liturgies by-the-book, unlike his more freeform predecessor. The first Masses organized by the new MC already show his thinking: The altar has been arranged to our Holy Father's published liking, with the traditional six tall candles and a crucifix in the middle on which the celebrant can focus. Traditional vestments and an old Papal Chair have reappeared. Msgr. Marini has also made several public statements supporting the Motu Proprio. Is a Papal Tridentine Mass in the future?

The Vatican music program is next up for reform: As anyone who has watched Masses broadcast from St. Peter's Basilica can attest, the Sistine Choir does not possess the professionalism one would expect from Christendom's premier church. Our Holy Father noticed: As a first step, in 2007, he appointed a new choir director, Fr. Pierre Paul, to re-establish Gregorian Chant as the primary form of singing the Mass and Vespers at St. Peter's Basilica. It would not be illogical to expect that soon, a new director will be appointed for the Sistine Choir, the special choir that sings for papal ceremonies.

Predictions for 2008

Already there are some encouraging signs for significant events to occur in the next year:

At least four one-time-only Masses are in the planning stages for significant venues in our region. This will expose a broader audience to the beauty of the Classic Form of the Mass.

The Latin Liturgy Association, and most likely C.I.E.L., will be holding conventions in 2008, drawing together the largest number of scholars and faithful devoted to the Tridentine Mass.

Inevitably, there will be some conflict between unsympathetic bishops and the Vatican. The situation should be played out differently now, however, as our Holy Father has empowered the Ecclesia Dei Commission to function in a problem resolution and enforcement role, rather than merely in a consultative capacity. A follow-up document clarifying the terms of the Motu Proprio is expected from the Commission in 2008.

An "Extraordinary" Year

In twelve months, both our local and the international situation have turned around better than we could ever have imagined. We have our Holy Father, local authorities, and especially the Holy Trinity to thank for that. And thank them we should, by way of spiritual bouquets and Rosaries of thanksgiving.

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