

Tridentine Community News

December 31, 2006

Tridentine Travelogue:

St. Boniface Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The year: 1994. The scene: Driving through the winding roads of Pittsburgh. Next to a freeway interchange, there was a billboard up on the right: "Traditional Latin Mass"!

During another visit to the city shortly thereafter, between news and traffic reports on the local equivalent of WWJ, there was a radio ad: "Latin Mass Every Sunday"! Subsequently, ads started to appear on the sides of public buses.

Fast forward to July, 2004, at the Latin Liturgy Association Conference in Indianapolis. There was a table with literature of all sorts spread out on it. Typical of small non-profit organizations, most of it was single color, one-step-above photocopying quality. But there, in the middle of the table, was a color, glossy brochure with the cover line, "In an era of constant change, are you looking for something timeless?" With professional-quality photography and a style reminiscent of a slick car advertisement, this piece shows in vivid color not only the Tridentine Mass, but the essence of the community life surrounding it. Next to the brochures: Business cards with Mass times and the tag line, "Make the Latin Mass the Highlight of Your Week...Every Week!"

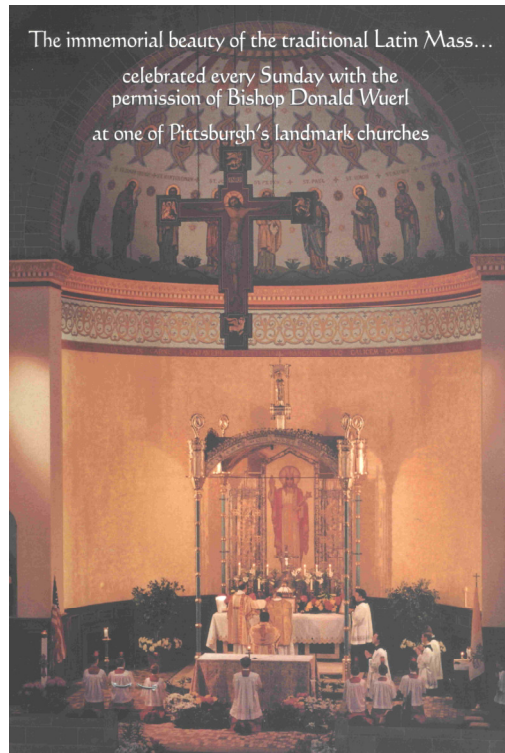
Who is behind all of this? The members of the Pittsburgh Indult Tridentine Mass at St. Boniface Church. Their media-savvy approach to attracting people to the Tridentine Mass has paid off with one of the largest congregations of any indult community in North America: Between 600 and 900 faithful attend every week. With two Masses every Sunday, as well as Masses on Holy Days, First Fridays, and First Saturdays, St. Boniface continues to teach the rest of us how to promote the Church's historic form of Mass.

It doesn't stop there: Over the last few years, St. Boniface has put together an impressive web site, with MP3 recordings of almost every Sunday sermon for the last two years! The celebrant and homilist, Fr. Kenneth Myers, has appeared on EWTN and is an outstanding public speaker. His homilies are of utmost orthodoxy and top-notch audio quality. Hear them for yourself at: www.pittsburghlatinmass.org

The web site also contains recordings to help new altar servers learn the responses of the Mass. One recording has just the priest's part, and the other includes the altar server's responses along with the priest. St. Josaphat and St. Michael Churches find these recordings so useful that we hand out CDs with them at our altar

server training classes. Fair warning: The Pittsburgh accents are a little strong to our Midwestern ears.

As the photos in the brochure and web site demonstrate, St. Boniface is a beautiful edifice, entirely appropriate for the Traditional Mass. Surprisingly, however, the freestanding altar is left in place during the Tridentine Mass, obstructing the view of the baldachino-covered high altar. For every argument that can be made about making the Novus Ordo altar of sacrifice permanent, a counter-argument can be made about such a structure obscuring the right of the Tridentine Mass to have its sacrifice maximally visible to the faithful. One rite should not violate the rights of the other, especially since the fact that a freestanding altar is moveable does not at all affect the ability of the faithful to concentrate on the Novus Ordo Mass. Tasteful, small wheels make an altar moveable, not truck tires.



The sizable St. Boniface Tridentine Community is supported with an active parish life: The community was invited to celebrate a Mass in Pittsburgh's St. Paul Cathedral in 2000. With the blessing of former Bishop Donald Wuerl, the Tridentine Community started its own traditional catechism program. St. Boniface is also fortunate to have Weddings, Funerals, Confirmations, and Baptisms in the Traditional Rite. Six members are presently in seminary, and several priests have already been ordained from the community.

Not unlike Holy Rosary Church in Indianapolis, the Tridentine Mass plays a key role in keeping historic St. Boniface Church viable. As part of Holy Wisdom Parish, which is a cluster of St. Boniface and St. Ambrose Churches, the Tridentine community shares St. Boniface with the original English community and a

Vietnamese group.

Those of us in metropolitan Detroit often joke that the story of our local indult Masses might make for a good book. Well, Pittsburgh already did write a book about their own experience in 1999: "*Post Decem Annos: Ten Years of the Latin Mass: A History of the Tridentine Mass in the Diocese of Pittsburgh*".

We're still waiting for ads in airline magazines and on-line videos of the Masses, but this author is sure that the enterprising members of St. Boniface are contemplating every avenue to promote our beloved Traditional Mass.

To see a copy of the St. Boniface brochure yourself, come to the sacristy after Mass. As a side note, it may interest you to know that one of the people behind the color brochure is a relative of a family who attends St. Josaphat from time to time.