

# Tridentine Community News

June 18, 2006

## *Organ Project Update*

Thanks to the intrepid David Wagner, organist at St. Joseph Church, the St. Josaphat Organ Committee has already inspected one used organ and is on the trail of three more.

There is no dearth of pipe organs for sale. Several suitable instruments are on the market. Catholic parishes across North America are closing. Other denominations occupy church buildings that have organs, but which are not used in their services, and are therefore available to be purchased.

The challenge is to select an organ which represents the best balance between purchase price; quality of the instrument (number of manuals, ranks, and stops); condition of the instrument (need for repairs); appropriateness of the casing and fit for the space; and cost to disassemble, move, and reassemble. Not only must we select the right organ, but we must also choose the best organ builder to relocate the instrument and adapt it into our space. This is not a process to be hurried, as we want to select an organ that will meet the needs of the parish for the indefinite future.



*St. Josaphat Music Director Wassim Sarweh evaluates a 3 manual, 47 rank Casavant organ*

## *Casavant: The Cadillac of Organs*

A few organ manufacturers stand out as having distinguished histories. Austin and Skinner are two brands that command respect, for example. But in North America, there is one manufacturer whose reputation is considered outstanding by virtually everyone familiar with organs: Casavant Frères of Quebec. Some of the finest organs in existence are Casavants. Three notable local installations are: 1) The gallery organ at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral; 2) St. Mary of Redford; and 3) Assumption Church, Windsor. One of the most acoustically impressive organ installations in the world, at St. Paul Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is a Casavant. It is the consensus of the Organ Committee that a Casavant organ would be our first choice. We are not ruling out other makes, but in light of the fact that there is no necessary correlation between the price of a used organ and its quality, we see no reason not to seek out a Casavant.

Equally important over the long haul is durability. Casavants in general are built to last; hundred-year old organs are still in operation. The instrument must also be serviceable: Fortunately, Casavant themselves, as well as a number of independent, local organ builders, are actively engaged in the relocation and refurbishment of existing Casavant organs.

To learn more about the craftwork of this remarkable company, and to see photographs of some impressive organ installations, visit [www.casavant.ca](http://www.casavant.ca)



## *Uncovering the Central Window*

An essential part of this project will be installing the new organ so that it uncovers the beautiful window of the Crucifixion. This will require that the pipes be located in chests on either side of the window, much like the instrument pictured above. Even if we were to locate an instrument whose pipes are already divided into two cases, it will be certain to require some retrofitting of the cabinetry to suit our particular choir loft.

## *Determining Fundraising Goals*

As we study the available instruments in greater detail, we will better understand the costs involved in relocation. We will then be able to provide you with a budget and fundraising goals. In the interim, we ask that you begin to think about supporting this project. Will your employer match contributions? Do you know of funding sources we could contact? E-mail Fr. Mark or the Organ Committee at the below address with any suggestions you may have. This is a rare opportunity for our generation to provide a lasting improvement for St. Josaphat that matches the caliber of the rest of this lovely historic structure.

*Questions? Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail [tridnews@stjosaphatchurch.org](mailto:tridnews@stjosaphatchurch.org) with your thoughts.*