

Tridentine Community News

July 30, 2006

LLA 2006 Convention Report, Part 2 of 2

Today, we continue our coverage of the Latin Liturgy Association convention, held this past July 14-16 in St. Louis, Missouri.

St. Frances de Sales Oratory

This year's convention was based at St. Frances de Sales Oratory (<http://www.institute-christ-king.org/stlouishome.htm>), a gothic structure somewhat similar to St. Joseph Church. In 2005, St.



Louis Archbishop Raymond Burke realigned several parishes. In the process, he gave St. Frances de Sales Church to the Tridentine Community of St. Louis, which had formerly shared St. Agatha Church with a Novus Ordo community. As a result, St. Frances de Sales has

become North America's largest Tridentine-only parish, both in terms of number of parishioners and sheer physical plant size. The term "Oratory" refers to the fact that the parish does not have geographic boundaries, nor is it an ethnic parish.

Archbishop Burke simultaneously invited the Institute of Christ the King, Sovereign Priest, to run St. Frances de Sales. The ICKSP is one of the two best known orders of priests who celebrate the Tridentine Mass exclusively. A future column will discuss them in greater detail.

Stepping into St. Francis de Sales is in many ways a step back in time. Everything about it is in grand scale, much like Hamtramck's St. Florian Parish. The parish complex includes numerous buildings, among them a grade school and high school, apparently presently unused. The ICKSP has plans to open a pre-seminary on the grounds, to prepare North American candidates for entry into their seminary in Italy. Given the size of the congregation, it is entirely possible that a school could be (re)opened. There is a busy parish life with daily Tridentine Mass, devotions, and continual activities. There are even multiple choirs – hard to imagine when we have our challenges assembling even one choir.

Masses & Liturgies

The highlight of each LLA Convention is without a doubt the liturgies that are offered. Each convention offers one exemplary Novus Ordo Latin and one Tridentine Mass. In recent years, as the Tridentine movement has overtaken the growth of the Novus Ordo Latin Mass, the principal Mass of the convention has consistently been according to the 1962 Missal.

Saturday morning, a Novus Ordo Latin Mass was offered at St. John the Evangelist Church, notable for an enormous mural of the

Ascension on the back wall of the sanctuary. Though the church had the architecture to support it, this Mass was not celebrated *ad orientem*. The choir and celebrant were clearly rather unfamiliar with the Latin Mass, which was evident to virtually everyone present. In all, this Mass was surprisingly out of character with previous LLA Masses. Fortunately, a powerful organ and accomplished organist made the Mass memorable musically.

Saturday afternoon, Vespers were offered according to the Novus Ordo Liturgy of the Hours in St. Mary of Victories Church, located in a Rivertown-like warehouse area on the banks of the Mississippi. Convention Chairperson and organist Regina Morris led a small schola, and introduced a memorable new setting of the Latin hymn, *Deus Creator Omnium*.

Saturday night, Dr. Richard Haefer and Fr. Samuel Weber led the chanting of Compline according to the Tridentine Divine Office.

Pontifical Solemn Mass

The best was saved for last: Sunday morning, Archbishop Raymond Burke, one of North America's top episcopal supporters of the Traditional Latin Mass, celebrated a Pontifical High Mass at St. Francis de Sales. This two hour ceremony was well rehearsed and quite simply the most flawlessly executed Tridentine Mass this writer has ever experienced. Archbishop Burke processed in wearing a *cappa magna*, a lengthy train rarely seen. A full throne was set up on the left of the sanctuary. The church was packed with approximately 1200 people, the vast majority of whom were not from the LLA. One wonders just how large the St. Francis de Sales



Tridentine congregation is, considering that they also have a second Mass on Sunday mornings!

At the conclusion of Mass, Archbishop Burke led a procession to install a new relic of St. Prosper at a side altar. During the procession, the congregation sang the refrain of the "Vatican Radio version" of *Christus Vincit*, while the choir sang the verses. It was spine-tingling to hear so many voices singing this familiar chant in unison.

St. Frances de Sales Oratory demonstrates just what is possible when magnificent, historic architecture is coupled with a large congregation and a supportive diocese. Most of us elsewhere in the world can only dream of the confluence of factors creating such a situation. Perhaps its most important role is demonstrating to other, more skeptical diocesan authorities that there is nothing to fear from a sizable Tridentine congregation. Well worth a visit if you are in the area.