

Positive Publicity for a Latin Mass community in Vancouver

Thought the following column in the diocesan newspaper of Hong Kong might be of some interest to the Canadians on the west coast. Quite unexpectedly from the opposite side of the globe, this (priest) author mentioned and indeed spoke highly of a Vancouver Latin Mass community in its effort to preserve the treasure of the Catholic Church. August 12, 2001 Edition of Kung Kao Pao, the weekly diocesan newspaper of Hong Kong.

Editor's Comment:

The preservation of the Traditional Mass and the ancient traditions of the Church are a sacred duty.

Remember that by the Sacrament of Confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ.

- Do not forget that it was to a soldier, a Roman centurion, to whom it was said, "Such faith have I not found, no, not in Israel"?**
- Do not forget that on that lonely hill outside of Jerusalem it was the captain of the guard who looked up said:
"Indeed this Man was the Son of God"?**
- Do not forget that it was Cornelius, the Roman centurion, a soldier in the armies of imperial Rome, who was the instrument used to teach even Peter the truth as to what was clean and unclean?**

It was not a soldier who betrayed the Man of Galilee, but the keeper of the silver.

"Latin Mass and Gregorian Chant"

The Hong Kong Cathedral Choir celebrates its 50th anniversary this year (2001). Some of its former members who have left Hong Kong for many years still remember vividly the joyful moments of their youthful years with the Choir, especially the golden years of Latin Mass and Gregorian Chants. Many early members had since immigrated overseas to various parts of the world. There will be a reunion in the city of Vancouver, Canada later this year, with thirty of its present and former members coming from Hong Kong, as well as from various places in the United States and Canada. The schola will sing (perform) the Latin Mass on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration, as part of the fund raising efforts for the construction of a new Chinese Catholic parish church building in Vancouver. Holy Canadian Martyrs Church, which I mentioned two months ago in this column, was originally an anglophone parish, is now a sina-anglophone parish, where Fr. Chu is the current pastor. The construction has started since some time ago. One generous

Catholic already donated 4 million Canadian dollars towards the cost of construction. The Cathedral Choir participates fittingly in this effort because not only many parishioners came from Hong Kong but some of them were also former members with the Cathedral Choir. One couple with gifted voices, who deeply love the Latin Mass, will travel from Manitoba to this reunion. Many parishioners would love to hear them sing the Latin hymns. Recalling the memoir of a priest during his years of the (communist) "re-education" labour camp in the (Chinese) northern frontier, he had no bible and was unable to say Mass. However, he found great comfort and power in singing Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and verses of kyrie Eleison in the missal from memory. His faith was strengthened (by singing the Latin prayers). Incidentally, the message reached another priest in the adjacent prison cell. Both realized that there were other sacerdotal brothers jailed for faith. Both were immediately filled with joy and warmth. The prison guards would immediately reprimand the priests whenever their singing in Latin was heard.

Indeed, Latin is the tradition and treasure of our Church. In my seminary days, everything was in Latin, including philosophy and theology courses, textbooks, public prayers and Divine Offices, and Masses. We lived in a different era. After 1965, the liturgical reform made the prayers and hymns readily available in vernacular, which drew near the distance between Church and the general public, as well as enabled the characteristics of different languages. However, the Latin language and Gregorian chants remain the priceless treasure of the Church.

One francophone Vancouver FM radio station broadcasts the Chants of Latin Gregorian Mass and Divine Office every morning. Upon hearing these holy chants, people become deeply moved as if entering an old monastery enclosure. In a prayerful atmosphere, the hearts are lifted upward. **Also in Vancouver, there is one Anglophone parish, which provides a Latin Gregorian Sung Mass every Sunday. These parishioners are not just nostalgic. They are also the guards who protect the sacred tradition of the Church.**