

# YEAR IN REVIEW

*By: Mark O'Neill*

2018 saw significant growth in the Lancaster Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) Community by every measure: attendance, parish integration and sacramental/devotional.

## **Attendance:**

- Based on a study of weekend Mass attendance over a 24 month period, the TLM **grew 17%** in 2018. We are the only Mass to experience growth at St Joseph church. We are frequently the 2nd highest attended weekend Mass.
- We have a **record number of altar servers** (22) in formation and launched our Knights of the Altar Chapter in April.
- Our daily Mass on Fridays began at 8:15 a.m. in late October and is well-supported by home-schooling families who have made it the **best attended daily Mass**.
- Combined with families from the 10:30 Mass, our community has made St. Joseph parish the **#1 homeschooling parish** in the deanery!

## **Parish Integration:**

- We have strong representation on **parish pastoral council and liturgy committee**.
- For the first time, our servers **participated in parish-wide events** such as 40 Hour Devotions and Lenten Stations of the Cross.
- Our community **planned the parish mission** led by Fr. Joseph Tuscan, OFM Cap.
- Our community celebrated its **10-year anniversary** with a Solemn Pontifical Mass and **parish-sponsored supper** with Bishop Gainer followed by a full-page news article. We launched a TLM **Young Adult Group** to foster growth among those 18-35.
- The parish kindly assumed the monthly costs to maintain the community's website at **www.lancasterlatinmass.com**
- We held a **parish-sponsored** father-son pizza and bowling event for all servers and enjoyed free use of the bowling alley in the Catholic Club.

## **Sacramental/Devotional:**

- We **doubled** the monthly number of Traditional Latin Masses celebrated at St. Joseph church with the addition of a weekly Low Mass on Friday.
- We began to celebrate **First Friday devotions** in November.

- We celebrated two nuptial Masses, one requiem Mass, two First Holy Communions, four baptisms and enjoyed weekly confessions before Mass - all in the old rite.
- Bishop Gainer assigned **Fr. Brian Olkowski** to St. Joseph, in part, to care for us.
- We are training two new **Masters of Ceremonies (MCs)** to restore Sunday High Mass.
- The parish assisted with the purchase of **altar rail cushions**.
- The pastor approved a **Christmas Day Mass** at 11 a.m. allowing our community to remain at our home parish for the first time in many years.
- The pastor approved the purchase of Traditional **baptismal booklets**.

### **A time for Thanksgiving...**

Before commenting on the year ahead, I want to pause to encourage everyone to offer a prayer of Thanksgiving in gratitude for the Blessed Lord's care for us through his ministers: Fr. Tcheou, Fr. Wolfe and Fr. Olkowski.

Despite the strain of fasting and travel, **Fr. Tcheou** has dutifully heard our confessions and offered the Mass for us week in and week out.

Few of the blessings we enjoyed in 2018 would have been possible without the support of our parish pastor, **Fr. Allan Wolfe**. Fr. Wolfe has been consistently supportive of our community's presence at St. Joseph. He has warmly and generously granted the vast majority of our requests.

Finally, **Fr. Olkowski** has committed himself to mastering both the low Mass for us each Friday and the high mass in time for Christmas. He honors us with the wearing of the cassock and shows knowledge not only of the sacred Latin language of our community but also respect for our customs, traditions and sensibilities. He has created a spirit for priestly vocations to flourish by not only celebrating a reverent Mass, but also taking time to instruct our boys on the rubrics before and after Mass. He cultivates holiness among us by being clear and firm in the pulpit, but gentle in the confessional. Deeply rooted in Christ and prayer, he has a zeal for souls. We are all grateful for his ministry.

### **2019 – Where do we go from here?**

In light of the blessings of 2018, I am filled with hope amidst the sober realities we still face as the Church experiences a painful passion.

Our goals for 2019 can be staged as follows:

Step One: **On-site regular celebrant**

The long-time goal of a traditional chaplain-in-residence was partially realized in June 2018,

when Fr. Olkowski was transferred to St. Joseph. After months of patient preparation and diligent study, Fr. Olkowski is comfortable with the Low Mass. The Christmas High Mass will be a sign that he has reached proficiency to soon begin regularly celebrating high mass.

We now await a **collaborative effort** among the diocese, Fr. Tcheou, Fr. Wolfe and Fr. Olkowski to permanently transfer Fr. Tcheou's celebrant duties to Fr. Olkowski.

Step Two: **Earlier Mass time**

An earlier Mass has been a goal of the community for over 10 years. While we are closer than ever, there is still much to be done and it will require significant input and careful, prudent decision-making as Mass schedules for two parishes (St. Joseph and San Juan) are involved. I hope to begin those discussions in the New Year and perhaps it could be feasible at some point in mid 2019. An 11:30 or noon Mass would suit our needs and facilitate continued growth.

**Secondary Goals include but are not limited to:**

1. Traditional Tenebrae services
2. Traditional Vespers
3. At least one evening of Traditional 40 Hour devotions
4. First Saturday Devotions
5. Rorate Mass in Advent
6. Traditional Confirmation by Bishop Gainer
7. Traditional Good Friday liturgy
8. Midnight Mass with German Hymns and parish unity combined choir
9. Increase pastoral home visits for house blessings, enthronements of the Sacred Heart and other devotional practices.
10. Pilgrim statue for Fatima to rotate among the families in the community.