

# Pontifical Mass Marks 10th Anniversary of Lancaster Latin Mass

By Mark A. O'Neill  
Special to the Witness

*“Dominus vobiscum... Et cum spiritu tuo.* It’s been nearly 40 years since the words of the Latin Mass echoed through the sanctuary of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church,” wrote Helen Colwell Adams in her May 2008 *Lancaster Sunday News* article entitled, “Return of Latin Mass Fills Church.”

Ten years later, on May 27, 2018, the Gregorian chant of the ancient liturgy echoed again at historic St. Joseph Church on Cabbage Hill in Lancaster, the home of the Lancaster Latin Mass Community. Bishop Ronald Gainer observed the tenth anniversary of the community with a Solemn Pontifical Mass at the Faldstool for 250 faithful.

Since moving to St. Joseph’s, the Latin Mass has grown to 150 souls each Sunday at 1:30 p.m. New parishioner and father of five, John DiCamillo said, “The Latin Mass Community has attracted numerous young families like mine to join the parish. We have been fully integrated into St. Joseph Church to create a parish unique in the diocese where both forms of the liturgy are reverently celebrated.”

In fact, such hybrid parishes are multiplying across the nation as bishops attempt to preserve aging but historic urban parishes through the addition of traditional Catholic communities. Longtime St. Joseph parishioner and leader of the parish Legion of Mary praesidium, Joanne Bauer, remarked, “The Latin Mass community has brought renewed vitality to our parish which was once home to Lancaster’s German community.” In 2015, former Harrisburg Bishop Kevin Rhoades created a similar model at St. Stanislas, a previously Polish parish in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

It was Bishop Rhoades who first established a second Latin Mass community in the Diocese of Harrisburg. To pastorally respond to the increasing number of Lancastrians who were driving to Harrisburg’s Latin Mass, he directed Father Frank Parrinello, then-member of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (FSSP), a religious order that exclusively offers the Traditional Latin Mass, to be the first celebrant. Father Parrinello drove each week from the FSSP apostolate at St. Lawrence Chapel in Harrisburg to Lancaster.

This establishment was in accord with Pope St. John Paul II’s 1988 apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei*, in which he directed that the former liturgy should be made available in a “wide and generous” manner by diocesan bishops. In 2007, Pope Benedict further expanded the right of Catholics



COURTESY OF MICHELE QUIGLEY

Bishop Ronald Gainer celebrates a Solemn Pontifical Mass at St. Joseph Church in Lancaster on May 27 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Lancaster Latin Mass Community. At left is Father Daniel Richards, who served as deacon. At right are Gregory Kramp, a diocesan seminarian, who served as subdeacon, and Father Pang Tcheou, weekly celebrant for the community, who served as master of ceremonies.

to have broader access to the ancient liturgy. He did this through his motu proprio entitled, *Summorum Pontificum*, in which he wrote that, “...any Catholic priest of the Latin rite...may use either the Roman Missal published in 1962 by Pope St. John XXIII or the Roman Missal promulgated in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.” This document resonated with Catholics worldwide, including the Lancaster faithful.

When Father Parrinello was transferred, the Lancaster Latin Mass was changed from a mission of the FSSP

to a diocesan apostolate. Father Pang Tcheou, then Catholic chaplain at Millersville University, became the celebrant. Over the years, the community has been blessed with a number of celebrants and, in August 2016, the Mass was transferred from St. Anthony Church to St. Joseph Church.

“Our continued growth has led to wonderful challenges,” says Joseph Cunningham, one of the early members of the community and advisor for the parish Knights of the Altar chapter. “With over a dozen altar boys in formation, a canonically-appointed chaplain in-residence is the fervent prayer of our community to help foster vocations to the priesthood and to continue our growth,” said Mr. Cunningham. “During this sesquicentennial anniversary of our diocese, a new generation is exploring their Catholic heritage and discovering the Mass of their ancestors. Many today are making sacrifices to travel long distances to worship in this particular form,” he added.

Nearly two years in their new home at St. Joseph Church, the Lancaster Latin Mass Community enjoys newfound stability. “The warm welcome from the parish has exceeded all our expectations,” says parishioner Michael DeBaKey. The community’s perseverance was blessed on June 18 with the arrival of Father Brian Olkowski, parochial vicar at St. Joseph’s. Back in 2008, while a student at Millersville University, Father Olkowski was among the first altar servers at the then-newly formed Lancaster Latin Mass.

For the Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrating the tenth anniversary, Father Tcheou, the community’s weekly celebrant, served as master of ceremonies, assisted by guardsmen from the St. Michael’s Guard – Latin Mass Contingent, which was recently formed to bring greater solemnity to the Mass. Father Daniel Richards,

pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in York, and Gregory Kramp, a diocesan seminarian, served as deacon and subdeacon, respectively. Father John Szada, chaplain of the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Elysburg, also assisted. Father Allan Wolfe, pastor of St. Joseph Parish, welcomed the faithful for a liturgy that was complemented by the striking architecture of St. Joseph’s 19th Century interior.

Choir director Philip Crnkovich, assisted by Jack Secogn, led the singing of Hans Leo Hassler’s *Missa Secunda*. The procession included the traditional singing of the *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus*. The *Ubi Caritas* by Maurice Durufle was the Offertory selection, and the *Panis Angelicus* by Claudio Casciolini was sung for Communion.

Although Bishop Gainer has celebrated the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite over a dozen times, he was particularly delighted on this occasion to offer First Holy Communion to two children: Augustine Blaise O’Neill, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mark O’Neill, and Andrew Christopher Sexton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sexton.

Following Mass, a dinner reception was held in the Msgr. Smith Social Hall. The Latin Mass Community gathered dozens of cards thanking the bishop and presented them to him in a gift box. Parishioner Michael DeBaKey commented, “Our children, teens and parents wrote to explain what this magnificent form of the liturgy means to us all, and to thank Bishop Gainer for his continued support.”

For more information on the Lancaster Latin Mass Community, including their biweekly newsletter, visit [www.lancasterlatinmass.com](http://www.lancasterlatinmass.com).

(Mark A. O’Neill is the Chairman of the Traditional Latin Mass Men’s Advisory Panel and a member of the parish council at St. Joseph Parish in Lancaster.)



Two boys who are members of the Lancaster Latin Mass Community make their First Holy Communion at the Pontifical Mass. In the light suit is Augustine O’Neill, and in the foreground is Andrew Sexton.