

# Tridentine Community News

July 7, 2024 – Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

## *Restoration at St. Vincent de Paul, Pontiac*

For decades, historic St. Vincent de Paul Church in Pontiac was the Sleeping Beauty of Oakland County. Centrally located on the Woodward Avenue Loop in downtown Pontiac, the church was largely ignored in favor of nearby St. Michael's, with which it was clustered and ultimately merged into St. Damien of Molokai Parish. Only a few Masses were offered each week at St. Vincent, and the church was left to slowly decay.

Since the arrival a few years ago of Fr. Jake VanAssche, however, St. Vincent has assumed new prominence in the region. Numerous Masses now take place there weekly, recurring special events such as Mercy Nights on Fridays are being held, the parking lot hosts special events during the Dream Cruise, and yes, Tridentine Masses have been held there on occasion. Fr. Jake tells us that he even celebrates private Masses on the two Side Altars from time to time.

Perhaps most astonishingly, this church which was pretty much left for dead now hosts a noon (Novus Ordo) Mass Monday-Friday which regularly attracts almost 100 people.

In light of all of this growth, the parish has recently undertaken several improvements: 1) A new confessional has been built. Previously the church had no confessional at all. The original one(s) must have been removed at some point in the past. Confessions are now offered before the weekday Masses. 2) The old organ case...which was strangely discovered not to have an organ inside it at all...has been removed from the choir loft, and the choir has been relocated from the front of the church back up to the loft. The parish is thinking of relocating the rarely-used Casavant organ from St. Michael Church over to St. Vincent's loft. 3) A new freestanding altar was installed two weeks ago and blessed by Archbishop Vigneron. There didn't appear to be anything wrong with the former freestanding altar, except...it had been built using pieces of the former Communion Rail, and Fr. Jake had mentioned the possibility of reinstalling the rail. Hmm...now what could he have in mind?



## *Insightful Article on Purposeful Altar Serving*

The Detroit Catholic recently published an article written by an older gentleman in California who has mentored altar servers since his youth. While in the Novus Ordo world nowadays, he writes wistfully about his days serving the Tridentine Mass in the 1960s. He laments that altar servers today have little to do compared with what was expected prior to the liturgical reforms that followed Vatican II. While he does not mention that the opportunity to serve the Traditional Mass still exists today, he does make several points that echo the perceptions of those of us familiar with the TLM: servers have many detailed responsibilities which inspire and challenge men young and not-so-young to assist at the altar. A few select quotes:

“Now, a note to pastors and associates: in many parishes, altar servers are losing their sense of place in the parish family. Please give them more responsibilities...”

Altar *service* still belongs to altar *servers*. How can serving be a source of priestly vocations if acolytes don't own their proper liturgical functions, are given no real duties, and don't know the parish routine?...

Incense is seldom used now. So servers aren't taught when to light the charcoal, let alone how to hold the thurible. What's left really is not enough activity to form a ministry.

Special Ministers of Holy Communion often cause liturgical role confusion. They encroach on the few functions left altar servers by standing around the sanctuary taking empty ciboria to the sacristy for washing...

It's a privilege to serve at the altar of the Lord. If soccer is more important to some kids, drop them from the roster. Invite the rest out for pizza. Or to a ball game. Take their parents, too. The laborers are *still* worthy of their hire.”

Read the whole article at:

<https://www.detroitcatholic.com/voices/the-laborers-are-still-worthy-of-their-hire-so-give-them-something-to-do>

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