

SAINT GREGORY SOCIETY

Newsletter

New Haven

Number 40: Spring 2019

❖ *The Saint Gregory Society—A Historical Restrospective*

In the year 2019 we mark the thirty-fourth anniversary of the establishment of the Saint Gregory Society. On October 3, 1984, Pope St. John-Paul II sent his encyclical letter, *Quattuor abhinc annos*, to the bishops of the world. The encyclical granted an indult encouraging the bishops to accommodate groups of the faithful requesting use of the Tridentine Missal of 1962 promulgated by Pope St. John XXIII. In response to the indult, two New Haven area Catholic laymen, Nicholas Renouf and Britt Wheeler circu-

lated a petition that was sent to the late John F. Whealon, Archbishop of Hartford, early in 1985. The Archbishop responded by granting permission for the traditional Latin Mass to be celebrated monthly at Sacred Heart Church in New Haven by the late Rev. Robert Ladish, Pastor. The first service was celebrated on the Feast of the Holy Family in January 1986.

❖ Renouf and Wheeler as Co-chairmen, William Riccio as Vice-chairman, and Margaret Gaffney as Secretary established The Saint Gregory Society. These officers solicited the aid of enthusiastic responders to the petition in forming an Executive Committee to spearhead

the mission of the Society of supporting the celebration of the old form of the liturgy locally and promoting its use worldwide.

❖ Both professional church musicians, Renouf and Wheeler established the Schola Cantorum of the Saint Gregory Society by enlisting the participation of area singers who were enthusiastic about performing Gregorian Chant and sacred polyphony in its intended context, the traditional liturgy. William Riccio was deeply conversant with the ceremonial of the traditional liturgy and was able to aid Fr. Ladish and other priests as well as altar servers in reviving the ceremonies of the old rite. From the start the services sponsored by the Society in New Haven were recognized as an exemplary continuation of the authentic liturgical movement championed by Pope St. Pius X at the beginning of the 20th century and reinforced by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical on the liturgy, *Mediator Dei*, promulgated in 1946.

❖ A high point in the early years of our organization was the Mass in the Presence of a Greater Prelate celebrated on the occasion of the Society's fourth anniversary in 1989. Archbishop Whealon accepted our invitation to preside at Mass, which was widely reported by the area press and attended by over 800. This glorious service did much to allay the anxiety that had been falsely stirred up suggesting that the Latin Mass had been "forbidden" and was somehow a suspicious activity.

Following this grand occasion, the Officers of the Society met with Archbishop Whealon to request an extension of the permission to all Sundays and Holy Days. According to the directive in Pope St. John Paul II's apostolic letter *Ecclesia Dei adflicta* of 1988, the Archbishop granted this extension in May 1990.

❖ Beginning in 1989, the Society's Schola Cantorum embarked on a series of professionally produced recordings featuring Gregorian Chant and sacred polyphony by the masters of the

High Renaissance. Each of these recordings presented a program of music as actually sung at a Mass on a major feast celebrated in New Haven sponsored by the Society. The concept of recording a great polyphonic Mass setting heard in the context of the proper Gregorian chants for the feast, along with the chanted lections, versicles and responses of the liturgy had rarely been attempted. The resulting cassettes and cd's received worldwide critical acclaim in the secular press, including *Fanfare Magazine*, *American Record Guide*, and *Early Music America*. They have also been aired on



A high point in the early history of the Saint Gregory Society was the Solemn Mass in the presence of a greater prelate celebrated on the occasion of the Society's fourth anniversary by the late John F. Whealon, Archbishop of Hartford in January of 1989.

National Public Radio nationwide and have met with enthusiastic praise in the Catholic press. Well-known English traditionalist author Michael Davies, who attended our Masses in New Haven several times, wrote in *The Remnant*: "...when it comes to recording the Traditional Mass, the Saint Gregory Society puts the United States at the top of the world league."

❖ In addition to our recordings, the traditional liturgical calendars and greeting cards published by the Society have been shipped to customers around the world. These publications not only provide a significant portion of the organization's income; they also present the message of the traditional faith in word, music, and image.

❖ Along with Catholics around the world, the members and friends of the Society rejoiced at the motu proprio *Summorum Pontificum* promulgated by Pope Benedict XVI in July of 2007. This apostolic letter extended the permission to celebrate privately the traditional Latin form of the liturgy to all priests and exhorted praiseworthy priests to provide for its public celebration for any stable group of the faithful requesting it.

❖ After the closing of Sacred Heart Church in 2009, the Society accepted the gracious offer of Fr. Roman Kmiec to transfer the archdiocesan permission for the local celebration of the Latin Mass to Saint Stanislaus Church in New Haven. For the past decade the members and friends of the Society have

rejoiced in the hospitality of the Vincentian Fathers and the parishioners at St. Stan's as well as the beautiful interior of the church so well disposed for the celebration of the traditional rite.

❖ At its inception, the Saint Gregory Society was a pioneer in the revival of the old liturgy. In southern Connecticut we were "the only show in town." The growth in the Latin Mass movement has prompted a proliferation of locations offering the Latin Mass, thus presenting a challenge to the attendance at the Society's Masses. As some older members have passed on to eternal life or now attend services elsewhere, it is therefore encouraging to witness a new generation of Catholics drawn to this age-old form or worship at St. Stanislaus Church in New Haven. Especially heartening are the families bringing children to these services—children who represent our hope for the future.

❖ The Society continues to make its contribution in support of the traditional liturgy worldwide. "Alumni" of our organization, including priests, altar servers, and musicians, have taken their experiences to other locations and groups throughout the nation. Under the supervision of Webmaster Paul Zalonski, our presence on the internet via the website and email list reaches an international audience of the faithful. An affiliate of Una Voce America, the Society is linked with the efforts of sister organizations throughout the nation and world. The Officers and Executive Committee of the Saint Gregory Society are committed to the belief that this venerable Rite, in its reverence, its beauty, and its richly symbolic reflection of two millennia of Christian experience, continues to have much to offer to the Church and today's world. We hope that you our members and friends will continue to offer your prayers and support to the Society in its noble mission of conserving and promoting this vital aspect of the Christian heritage.

✠ *The Saint Gregory Purgatorial Society*

Concern for the souls of our beloved dead is part of seeking happiness in this life and in the next; the hundredfold reward (Mark 10:30) is a crucial element of Divine Revelation. We know also that Catholic theology of Holy Communion teaches that we are promised eternal life if we are in right relationship with the Triune God when we receive the Blessed Sacrament.

In the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed we say, "I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." Yet, death remains a mystery because there is an interruption in our conception of space and time. So, where does praying for the dead come from and why is it important?

The Old Testament bears witness in Second Maccabees to praying for the dead: "And making a gathering, he [Judas Maccabeus] sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins" (2 Maccabees 12:43-46)

Having concern for the souls of our beloved dead is truly a matter of charity because of our relationship with them in history, and because these same souls are baptized members of the Church. When we pray for the dead, we ask that they receive the grace of purification from sin so that their souls may live in the presence of the Most Holy Trinity. Divine Revelation and Sacred Tradition reveal and teach from experience that no one dies in a state of absolute perfection.

Just as pious associations of a former era assisted souls with prayer and good works in bringing souls to the communion of saints, the St. Gregory Purgatorial Society does the same today. The Church considers the Mass to be the greatest possible prayer of intercession, as it is the perfect offering of Jesus Christ to the Father. Saint Odilo, the great Benedictine Abbot of Cluny (d. 1048), decreed that all of the monasteries associated with Cluny offer special prayers for the souls in Purgatory on November 2 (or at a Votive Mass of the Dead scheduled during the month of November). We stand in this tradition. At the Purgatorial Society Masses we will ask Jesus Christ to intercede on behalf of our loved ones that "Perpetual light may shine on them, and that their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, may rest in peace." Participation in the St. Gregory Purgatorial Society is a richly rewarding spiritual work of mercy. Enrolled members are remembered at the monthly First Friday Mass throughout the year as well as the special High Requiem Mass offered on All Souls' Day (or during the



photo: Glenn Trunkfield

Solemn Mass on the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Candlemas, was preceded by the Blessing of Candles and Procession at St. Stanislaus Church, New Haven on February 3.

month of November depending on the schedule of the Parish). Remember your beloved departed today with an enrollment for calendar year 2019 by visiting the St. Gregory Purgatorial Society web page at <http://saint-gregory.org/purgatorial-society>.

✠ *Candlemas 2019 at St. Stanislaus Church*

The Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or Candlemas, was celebrated on February 3 in the Society's current home at St. Stanislaus Church. Solemn Mass was preceded by the Blessing of Candles and Procession through the beautiful nave of the church by the congregation holding lighted candles. We were gladdened by the good attendance for this, one of the loveliest services of the Church year. Fr. Peter J. Langevin, Chancellor of the Diocese of Norwich, was celebrant and homilist, Fr. Matthew Dougherty, O.Praem, served for his first time as Deacon at a traditional Latin Mass, and our own William Riccio, Jr., served as Subdeacon. We extend our special thanks to the three sacred ministers, along with Master of Ceremonies Michael Nazzaro and servers at the altar Robert Alechnowicz, and Glenn Nelson, as well as the members of our Schola Cantorum for all they did to make this a most memorable occasion.

This newsletter is published periodically by

THE SAINT GREGORY SOCIETY

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✠ *The Society Salutes Master of Ceremonies par excellence William V. Riccio, Jr.*

On the occasion of this retrospectively-oriented issue of our Newsletter, we are pleased to focus on the role played by William Riccio in the life of our organization. Since its establishment 34 years ago, Bill has been the Vice-Chairman of the Society, as well as the de facto Master of Ceremonies for the Latin Masses celebrated at Sacred Heart Church, and more recently, at St. Stanislaus Church.

Bill is from the last generation of Catholic children to reach the age of reason when the Tridentine form of the liturgy was still normative in the Western Church. He began training as altar server in 1963 right after his confirmation in the fourth grade. When the *Novus Ordo* was introduced in 1970, he was a junior in high school. He was astonished at the disruptive changes from one week to the next and remembers the confusion, and even anger, among the faithful at the time.

As a young man Bill had always considered the priesthood, and even made initial attempts to pursue a vocation. He was, however, put off both by the form of the “New Mass” and many of the attitudes that surrounded it. Providence was perhaps saving him for the role he assumed as a lay person free to respond forcefully to Holy Father St. John-Paul II’s Indult of 1984.

When the Society was established in 1985, Bill agreed to recruit and train servers at the altar to assist at the Latin Masses it sponsored. The first group comprised three Yale students. Soon others from families in attendance at these services presented themselves, eager to learn the decorous ceremonies and texts that make up the altar server’s role.

Bill notes that the almost military precision and discipline of the ceremonial appeals to young men who seek structure and rational organization in their young lives. He has been gratified by the number of those that he has trained have gone on to train others, and in several cases, pursue priestly vocations.

Bill also has assisted many of the priests who have celebrated our Latin Masses. In the case of older priests who had been ordained in the old rite, he has helped them “brush up” on their execution of the ceremonial. More recently, with a new generation of priests eager to learn the traditional ceremonies, he has taught them “from scratch.”

Members of our Society should take great pride in Bill’s functioning as our “ambassador to the world” in our mission of promoting and supporting the world-wide resurgence of the traditional liturgy. He has traveled across the nation to organize and serve as master of ceremonies at the grandest services offered in conjunction with conventions and visits by prelates from around the world who champion the use of the traditional liturgy. Just two highlights from among these

many history-making occasions in which Bill was a major participant exemplify his enormous contribution to the “new liturgical movement.” The first is the Pontifical Mass from the Throne celebrated on the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter, February 22, 1992, by Alfons Maria Cardinal Stickler, at St Agnes Church in New York City.



William Riccio (on the right) served as Master of Ceremonies at the Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrated by the Most Reverend James Massa, Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn at St. Vincent Ferrer Church in New York City on February 16.

photo: Stuart Chessman

This was the first Indult Mass celebrated by a major prelate in our country. Only a few weeks ago (February 16) Bill participated in the Solemn Pontifical Mass offered at the magnificent Church of St. Vincent Ferrer in New York City by The Most Reverend James Massa, Auxiliary Bishop of Brooklyn. Participation in such events has led Bill to be very optimistic about the future of the traditional liturgy in the life of the Church. He notes that at the more recent of the services mentioned above, most of the 700 people in attendance were under 40, and that in France today 95 percent of those who attend church regularly go to the traditional Mass.

In Bill’s own words, “It’s hard to believe that the St. Gregory Society has sponsored Masses for 33 years. When I got into this, I didn’t know where it was going to lead. The Society has set the standard that is followed in most places in the country, certainly as it is followed in the East. The SGS may not be the only Latin Mass game in town today as it was in the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, its alumni have gone on to various places in Connecticut and beyond and used what they learned to plant good seed elsewhere. The work I’ve done for the society has been the most rewarding in my life.”

✠ *How YOU can Help!*

We invite all in the New Haven area who receive this Newsletter to support the traditional liturgy by attending the Latin Mass at St. Stanislaus Church as frequently as possible. We also urge you to offer prayers of thanksgiving for having the liturgy in its ancient form again available throughout the world.

The support of our enrolled members, the second-offering contributions of those in attendance at the Latin Masses at St. Stanislaus Church, and the sale of our publications remain our chief sources of the revenue that supports the Society. We note once again that the work of our organization is conducted entirely by volunteers—every penny of our income goes directly into the support of the traditional liturgy in our community and throughout the world.

A few of our loyal members have already renewed their membership in the Society for calendar year 2019. We offer them our thanks and invite the rest of you to please consider enrolling

for calendar year 2019 today to do your part in furthering the work of the Society with your tax-deductible contribution. A membership form is printed on the back of this newsletter for you to mail in with your check; or you can enroll electronically on our website at: www.saint-gregory.org/membership. A roster of 2019 memberships y0 date will be printed in the fall issue of this Newsletter.

THE TRADITIONAL LATIN LITURGY *will be celebrated in the services of*

SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH

State Street at Eld Street, New Haven

Lent and Holy Week 2019

Lactare Sunday, March 31—High Mass at 2:00 P.M.

coffee hour following in Holy Name Society Room of school

Passion Sunday, April 7—Low Mass at 2:00 P.M.

*Palm Sunday, April 14—High Mass at 2:00 P.M.

*Good Friday, April 19—Service at Noon

*Easter Day, April 21—High Mass at 2:00 P.M.

** The services of Holy Week will feature sacred polyphony and Gregorian chant performed by the full Schola Cantorum of the St. Gregory Society*

For further details about the Holy Week Services visit our Website at: www.saint-gregory.org

DIRECTIONS TO SAINT STANISLAUS CHURCH:

FROM THE NORTH: I-91 South to Exit 4, State Street. At the end of the ramp turn right and then turn left at the light onto State Street; proceed three blocks to the church on your right.
FROM THE SOUTH: Take I-95 to Exit 48 onto I-91; proceed North to Exit 3, Trumbull Street. Bear right at the end of the ramp, and at the light turn right onto Orange Street. Take the first right onto Bradley Street. Go to the end of Bradley Street, and take a left onto State Street. The church is on the left, one block down. Park in the city lot facing the front of the church across State Street, or turn left onto Eld Street and take first right past church into the church lot.

KEEP IN TOUCH ONLINE

please, Please, PLEASE ! . . .
SEND US YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS so that we can send you up-to-date information on the Mass schedule at Saint Stanislaus Church, special events, programs of music planned for the liturgy, and other news. Send your message to:

saintgregorysociety@gmail.com

We faithfully promise not to release your e-mail address to any other organization or individual.

SAINT GREGORY SOCIETY ONLINE!

Visit the our regularly updated website
 at: **www.saint-gregory.org**

SAINT GREGORY SOCIETY
 P.O. Box 891
 New Haven, CT 06504



Attend the Latin Mass Regularly:
 Sundays at 2:00 P.M.
 Saint Stanislaus Church, New Haven
 Corner of State and Eld Streets

SAINT GREGORY SOCIETY
Membership Enrollment Program
 2-0-1-9

Crusader	~	\$1,000 & up
Benefactor	~	\$500
Patron	~	\$200
Sponsor	~	\$100
Sustaining Member	~	\$50
Regular Member	~	\$25
Student/Senior Citizen	~	\$15

Your enrollment as a Member, your prayers, and your attendance at the Traditional Mass are the clearest ways you can help to ensure that Catholics in our community may continue to enjoy the graces that flow from the Holy Sacrifice offered in this venerable rite.



*Memberships are for one calendar year,
 January-December*

Please enroll me as a Member of the Saint Gregory Society for calendar year 2019. Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution.

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 telephone: (_____) _____
 e-mail: _____
 Category: _____ Amount: _____

Please make check payable to the Saint Gregory Society and mail with this form to:
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 P.O. Box 891, New Haven, CT 06504
 on the Internet: <http://www.saint-gregory.org>
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