

July 29, 2017

## Solesmes and Fontgombault

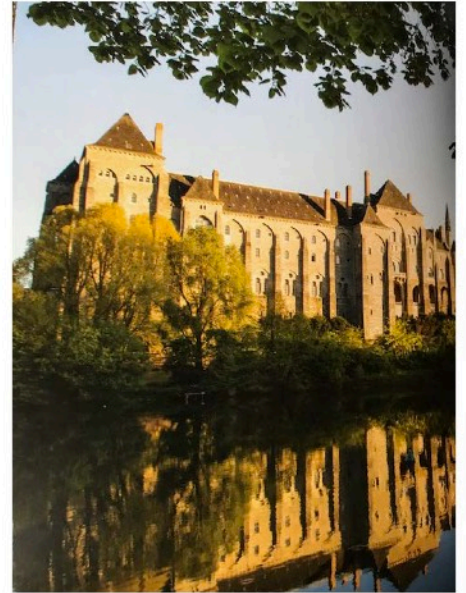
Dear Parishioners,

This week I drove from the Mediterranean Sea to within a few hours of the English Channel, traversing France so I could spend some time in two other Benedictine monasteries and observe their liturgical practices.

The Abbey of St. Pierre at Solesmes, which is grand and almost royal in its splendor, celebrated its thousandth year in 2010, which is absolutely astounding to consider. The monastery is a gatekeeper of the Church's greatest musical treasure which is Gregorian chant. The liturgies here are according to the new form of Mass, albeit chanted in Latin.

The most famous of Solesmes' abbots was Dom Prosper Guéranger, who in the midst of the 19<sup>th</sup> century worked tirelessly to bring France's liturgy in line with the Roman Rite as promulgated by Pope Pius V in 1570. Dom Guéranger's tomb is hallowed in the crypt. It is closed to the public

but I was given admittance to pray there briefly, remembering especially those of you who are dedicated to assisting at the Mass in our own parish.



The great Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes, where the treasure of Gregorian chant was preserved.



This venerated statue of Our Lady and Lord is from the 1100's. It is at the ancient abbey of Fontgombault. The tall candle at the left is burning for your intentions.

It is as if the monasteries are still fulfilling their ancient role of preserving civilization. At meals the monks chant readings from Christian history, almost as a tribal elder might chant his people's oral tradition. This has the powerful effect of solemnizing and sacralizing one's sense of Time as it progresses toward its consummation on the Last Day. It is quite sobering to listen to, and makes one pause and ponder how our own brief individual lives fit in the context of the grand sweeping drama we call Salvation History...

May God keep you and Our Lady accompany you as summer unfolds...

--Fr. de Rosa



Sculpture of the Dormition of Our Lady at the Abbey of Solesmes