Solesmes and Fontgombault

but I was given admittance to pray there briefly, remembering especially those of you who are dedicated to

in our own parish.

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 the new form of Mass, albeit chanted in Latin.

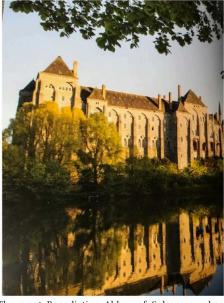
The most famous of Solesmes' abbots was Dom Prosper Guéranger, who in the midst of the 19th century worked tirelessly to bring France's liturgy in line with the Roman Rite as promulgated by Pope Pius V in 1570. Dom Guéranger's tomb is hallowed in the crypt. It is closed to the public

This venerated statue of Our Lady and Lord is from the 1100's. it is at the 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 it's 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



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

Monasteries also have "daughters," or groups of monks who have departed to establish new foundations. Perhaps the most famous "daughter" of Solesmes is the Abbey of Notre-Dame de Fontgombault, where I also spent several days. This too is an ancient monastery, founded in the 12th century. They however do not concelebrate their Masses, which are all offered individually according to the traditional form. One can envision the scene in the dim light of early morning when the great nave of the church, with its dozens of side altars, is filled with priests each offering their ancient abbey of Fontgombault. The tall candle at the left is burning for private Masses in hushed tones by candlelight, with small



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