Old ways draw Catholics to rebel Redford church

Each Sunday, 350-400 Catholics trav-el from all over metropolitan Detroit to attend Mass in a Redford Township building that once was a Mormon church.

Those who gather at St. Pius X Cath-

Those who gather at St. Pius X Catholic Church, 23310 day, hear a Mass in Latin celebrated by a priest who faces the altar rather than the congregation.

He follows the forms that characterized the Mass in the days before Vatican II.

"It's just as if you turned the clock back," said the Rev. Donald Sanborn, pastor. He flies in from Connecticut some weekends to celebrate Mass and lead the local flock. On other weekends,

one of several other priests comes here in his stead.

"Whatever rules existed years ago exist now in our society," added the priest, who looks younger than his 30 years.

The church is part of a growing list of institutions established in several countries by the Society of St. Pius X, founded in 1970 by Archibshop Marcel LeFebvre in Freborg, Switzerland.

And it is precisely lis return to the past through rejection of Valtican that appeals to members of the St. Pius X congregation. It's also the reason worshippers come from as away as Troy and the downriver area.

But he added that he feels neither the archbishop nor the pope 'have the authority to outlaw traditions of the church and replace them with what is obviously detrimental to the church and have been condemned by former popes."

popes."

Such moves are detrimental, he said, because there has been "a loss of vocations and a dramatic decline in atten-

WHEN FOUNDED a decade ago, the Society of St. Pius X had sanction from its Swiss diocese but not from the Vatican. It chose as its fatron a pope who regined early in this century and condemned earlier attempts at reforms in the Mass and Catholic dogma.
"It aimed to preserve Catholic tradition and the Mass the way it was before Vatican III," said Sanborn.

SANBORN was not hesitant to note that "the Archbishop of Detroit would say that what we do here is illegal as far as the Catholic Church is con-cerned."

A young seminarian at the time the society was founded, he discovered its purposes matched his own thinking.

The feeling was that reforms of the candidate and having the priest turn away from the tabernacle, were borrowed from the Church of the Latter-day the tabernacle, were borrowed from the Church of the Latter-day Saints.

Some 200 persons worship in the Armada location each Sunday. The socious matched the priest turn and a location each sunday. The socious from the church of the Latter-day that the priest performs the Mass; the

ue taoernacie, "were borrowed from Protestantism and were the very things condemified by the pope at the time of Martin Luther." "It is part of the theology of the Mass that the priest performs the Mass; the people participate by prayer but have ne sesential role," he added. Sanborn heard about the society while experiencing his own doubts about Vatican II. He elected to enter Lef'ebrve seminary less than a year af-ter it was founded in November 1970.

ABOUT THE TIME he began his seminary training in Switzerland, a group of Catholics in Detroit were find-ing equal dissatisfaction with their

They invited a priest to say traditional Mass, Sanborn said, "and then they

naw and travels on the conce a month.

Other churches are in Cleveland, Norfolk, South Bend and Cincinnati. There is a priory (a monastery) on Long Island and a boarding school at St. Mary, Kansas.

All are served by priests from the so-ciety's St. Thomas of Aquinas seminary at Ridgefield, Conn., which Sanborn serves as rector. Different spiritual leaders go to the various churches.

"We change around," he said. "We might even decide on the way to the airport to switch destinations." No priests are on hand in the local parishes

during the week, and he said that can be a problem.

"But we ask people to be very sensi-

"But we ask people to be very sensitive to needs and keep us informed," he added. "And if there were a major need, we would fly out. Even when priests: are in the parish, there are many times when they do not get there in time anway."

IN REDFORD, Sunday Masses are held at 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. There are daily Masses at 8 p.m. Friday and at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, but these do not fill the Sunday obligation.

The traditional Baltimore Catechism

is taught Thursday nights for all in grade school and high school.

Leadership in all the established par-ishes is being stepped up, but slowly, as training continues.

Thirty-five seminarians and three brothers are at the Connecticut school and four nuns trained in France soon will come to this country to serve in the boarding school.

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