

Ecumenism, Italian Style

Utrecht (NC) — The average Italian has little notion of the ecumenical movement, a Dutch priest said here, and he offered some proof for his statement. Father Leo Alling von Oesau, director of the Dutch Documentation Center in Rome, said he was driving through the Italian countryside when he saw a sign announcing the Ecumenical House.

Being a specialist in ecumenism, Father von Oesau said he followed the directions to the convent and asked the nun at the door whether the Sisters arranged conferences for Catholics and Protestants.

"Oh, no," the nun was reported to have answered. "This is a home for the aged. Recent we opened our home to foreigners, too. That's why we call it Ecumenical House."

From Silence to Song at Worship

The following article is the last in a series of ten on the "Mass" reforms in the public worship of the Church which were enacted by the Vatican Council. The author, an official Council expert, is a professor of canon law at the Catholic University of America and the immediate past president of the North American Liturgical Conference.

By FATHER FREDERICK M. MCANANUS (N.C.W.C. News Service)

From gloomy silence to joyous song—this is the revolution demanded by the Second Vatican Council for Catholic worship.

It may be expressed in other ways: from passive concern at Mass to active involvement; from a liturgy understood by priests to the people's worship.

The Council's intention in the liturgy is revolutionary, partly because it decrees through reform of the services of worship, partly because it brings the whole Church abreast of the Biblical, catechetical, ecumenical and theological movements of the past few decades.

To take one example, the picture of the Church as a legalistic, authoritarian society is bypassed. The Church is seen as a community of love, as an assembly of worshippers.

The center of Christian worship is the celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Mass. According to the Council, this is the height toward which all the other activities of the Church lead. It is the source and starting point for the entire Christian life of the faithful.

Yet, more often than not, the Mass rite now appears to be an impersonal and mechanical rite, or the weekly payment of a debt to God or a haven of escape from the real world.

For a long time people have been described as "hearing Mass" and priests have been described as "saying Mass." It was a formula of words, words spoken in a language which not one participant in 100 or 1,000 could understand without a translation. The involvement of the individual person in the community's worship at a minimum. Communion hardly appears to be the joyful feast of the Christian family, a Lord's common table.

"The Church," says the Council, "has never failed to come together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus, reading those things which were in the Scriptures which the Church has handed down, celebrating the Eucharist in which the victory and triumph of His death are again made present, and at the same time giving thanks to God for his unrepeatable gift." (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, in praise of his glory (Eph. 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This description of Holy Mass is far removed from the routine and hurried celebration that is still common — and in which the mystery of God's great deeds in His people is not revealed but made mysterious.

The description also shows how the Council preferred the authentic language of the Bible to the technical catechism formulas and the abstract terms of theology.

In the concrete, the Pope and the bishops of the Council decided that the whole Mass should be simplified. Elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded. Other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be recovered in the ways which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary.

This reform of the Mass prayer and rites, now underway with the appointment of a new commission by Pope Paul VI, may involve cutting down the Ordinary prayers, restoring the Eucharistic prayer or Canon to its former effectiveness, solemnly proclaimed, and improving the announcement of God's word. None of this is change for the sake of novelty, but for the sake of meaningful, genuine worship.

The directives adopted by the Council for this work to be carried out after many centuries of divorce between nave and sanctuary.

Finally, the bishops adopted a principle of adaptation, so that there may be flexibility and diversity in the liturgy to suit local conditions. Only God and His teaching are unchanging. Human institutions and human prayers must change, and be adapted to men's understanding. A fundamental purpose of the Second Vatican Council is "to adapt more suit-

ably to the needs of our own times these institutions which are subject to change."

The Church is always young, always alive. Its renewal and reform affect people in different ways. For some, change seems to be a harsh renunciation of the past, even though the Council has explained the Christian faith and its purposes in the very words of holy Scripture.

Above all, the Constitution upon the liturgy fulfills the vision of Pope John XXIII, that renewal of the Church might be the first step toward the unity of all who believe in Christ. As a divine institution, the Church is without spot or blemish. As a human institution, made up of sinful men, the Church may be unattractive and incomprehensible — in fact the vast, vast majority of men are unaware of, or are indifferent to, the Church.

The Council of renewal does not hesitate to express the Christian hope with gladness: "We eagerly await the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory."

COURIER-JOURNAL
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GOD LOVE YOU!
By MOST REV. FULTON J. SHEEN

A Program For Making Us Catholic:
It is the nature of affluence to blind us to the needs and wants of others; the rich man never saw Lazarus at his door; God called the rich church of Laodicea in the Apocalypse the "poorest" of all the churches. The prosperous Church becomes the ghetto Church. A dead parish is like the Dead Sea. The latter receives fresh water from the River Jordan, but it has no outlet. It keeps them all for itself and is dead.

- In order that we in America might be more united with the suffering, impoverished Christ in the rest of the world, it would be well for us, instead of traveling the "Via Dolorosa" to begin a Via Dolorosa in the following way:
 - Give three per cent of all parish contributions to the Holy Father for the propagation of the Faith in other lands and for the feeding of their poor. If we can afford a million dollar school, we can give the equivalent of five churches in mission lands, each costing \$5,000.
 - Many of the priests in the Mission live on Mass stipends with no other source of income or livelihood. Priests in the United States could send their stipends to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith which distributes them to bishops in mission lands and they, in turn, to needy priests. In this way there is equitable distribution to all orders, all societies and all areas in the Mission.
 - High school students, both young men and young women, could make sacrifices to buy jeeps for mission lands. Once sufficient money was collected to pay for a jeep and the transportation for a missionary, the money could be sent to the Holy Father and his Sacred Congregation, who would assign the jeep to the nearest mission.
 - Housewives and mothers could gather spare clothes and send them to a missionary under the direction of their Diocesan Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.
 - Doctors, surgeons, dentists and engineers could offer their services for two months of the year to the poor people in some mission land under the direction of the Catholic Medical Mission Board (16 West 17th Street, New York, New York).

Remember, Christ is in the rich only because they are virtuous. He is in the poor because they are poor. Make yourselves poor for the Lord and send your sacrifice to The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 368 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10001.

GOD LOVE YOU to J.E. for \$1.55 "My brothers and I sold some old toys that we found in the basement and want to give the money to help hungry children." ... to C.G. for \$25 "I have made many holy altars for relatives and friends which were all stickers of love. I am happy to send this money from selling one." ... to S.B. for \$10 "I saved this on laundry." ... to J.E.W. for \$5 "The sacrifices of an urchin, motherless Indians and a Unitarian couple—it was all they had."

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE? Read our special May-June issue of MISSION and learn how you can make others comfortable too. If you wish to be put on our mailing list for this bi-monthly magazine, just ask us via: The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 368 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10001.

Cut out this column, pin your sacrifice to it and mail it to Most Rev. Fulton J. Sheen, National Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 368 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001, or your Diocesan Director, Rev. John F. Duffy, 50 Chestnut Street, Rochester, New York 14604.

God's World

Heroic Charity

By REV. LEO J. TRESE

Someone has asked, "Do the souls in purgatory know the identity of the persons who are praying for them?" The answer is, probably yes, although we cannot be sure. However, we are certain that, once in heaven, the new saint will know all things; will know who it was who sped him on his way to God.

By our remembrance of the suffering souls we shall people heaven with powerful friends who will have a keen interest in bringing us to heaven also.

Aside from this somewhat selfish motive, our prayers for the souls in purgatory are an important part of our fulfillment of the great Law of Love. God wants these souls with Himself as quickly as possible. Out of our love for God, we shall make every effort to hurry them on to His embrace.

Moreover, the souls in purgatory are as truly our neighbors as are our fellow-humans here upon earth. We cannot see their sufferings as we do see, in pictures, the sufferings of the starving Asiatics or disease-ridden Africans. It is our faith which must move us to compassion for the suffering souls, whose bitter necessity we can but faintly understand.

Many persons, inspired by love for God and neighbor, are impelled to make the Heroic Act of Charity.

THE HEROIC ACT OF CHARITY consists of an offering made to God, for the souls in purgatory, of all the indulgences which we ever may gain and of all the satisfactory works which we ever shall perform, as well as those which will be offered for us by others after our death.

By "satisfactory works" are meant all those actions which have any penitential value. This will include all penances which we perform, all sufferings which we bear with resignation, all prayers, Masses and acts of charity, insofar as these have any "atoning" power.

It should be noted that there is a difference between satisfaction and grace. The sacrifice of the Mass, for example, has a great satisfactory value, an immense power to atone for sin. At the same time the Mass is a rich source of grace; it can deepen and intensify the divine life within me which makes me a holier person.

The "atoning" value of the Mass I can offer for the souls in purgatory. The "grace" value of the Mass I cannot offer for anyone else; it is something which happens to my own soul and is not transferable to another. This is true also of the graces which accrue to me in other sacraments and good works. Consequently the Heroic Act of Charity does not mean that I cease to grow in grace. It means rather that I give to the souls in purgatory the "satisfying" value of all that I do, and of all that will be done for me after my death.

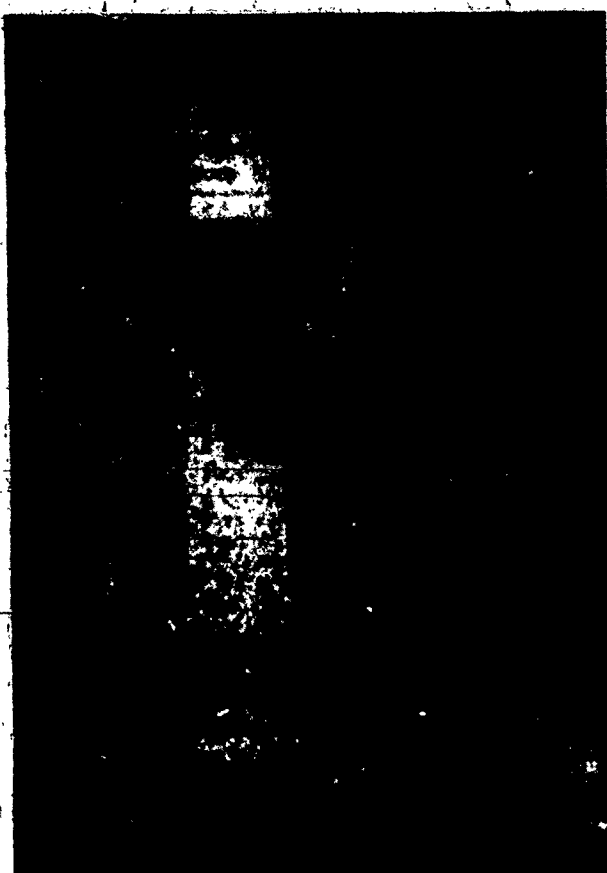
There is no official formulary for making the Heroic Act. It can be done quite simply in my own words: "O my God, I offer to Thee for the souls in purgatory all the indulgences I shall ever gain, all the satisfactory value of works I shall ever perform, and all those which shall be offered for me after my death."

Once made, this offering is permanently effective, although it may be renewed from time to time. It can, of course, be revoked. It is not a vow.

The Church has placed her seal of approval on the Heroic Act. By special legislation, a person who has made the Heroic Act may apply all indulgences to the suffering souls, even those which ordinarily are not so applicable.

This Act is called "heroic" because it means stripping ourselves, for the sake of others, of everything which would shorten or lessen our own purgatorial pains. However, I doubt whether the Act is as heroic as it sounds. I suspect that anyone with sufficient love for God and for souls to make the Act, will have little to fear from God's justice after death.

Jesuit Named
Boston — (NC) — A Jesuit student, Henry Ansgar Kelly, S.J., has been appointed a Junior Fellow of Harvard's Society of Fellows, the first member of a religious community order to receive such an appointment.



'Cross Of Peace'

Makanda, Ill. — (RNS) — This 111-foot "Cross of Peace" atop Bald Knob Mountain near Makanda, Ill., will be dedicated on Easter Sunday. Wayman Presley, a retired rural mail carrier, suggested the structure and inspired contributions toward the \$250,000 expenditure through television appearances. Covered with white porcelain, the cross is illuminated at night by floodlights and is visible for many miles.

Negro, Moslem Clash Key to Sudan Crisis

Kampala, Uganda — (NC) — The problem of the neighboring Sudan is basically one of a deep and perhaps unbridgeable gulf between Black Africa and Arab widely diverse culture — Negroes and Arabs — are enclosed within the political limits of a single country. The Arabs, the farther advanced of the two economically and educationally, are the rulers. They assume this role naturally, since for centuries they regarded the Negroes as their slaves. Indeed, hundreds of thousands and probably millions of them were.

From the moment of assuming power in 1956, the Arabs of the north began hammering away at the slogan: "One nation, one language, one religion." Since then, their attempt to unify the country into one nation has centered partly around the Arabic language, but chiefly around the Islamic religion. Force has been their chief means of bringing Arabic and Islam to the vast south.

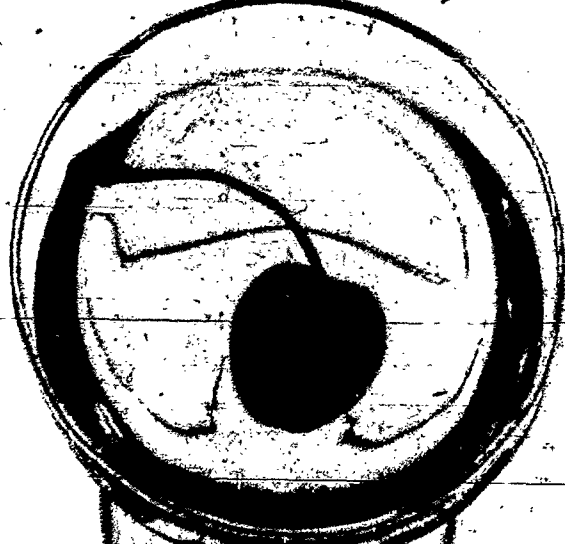
Arabic has taken virtually no root in southern Sudan. Few teachers from the North will go to the south, and the southern teachers themselves have a difficult time learning the Arabic language, far less teaching it.

Islam is easier to impose. It involves little more than changing a man's name.

CDA Slates Hat Show

Owego — A hat show will follow the business meeting of Court St. Ross of Lima, Catholic Daughters of America, Tuesday night, April 7. The meeting will be held in St. Patrick's Parish hall, Mrs. Lillian McArdle, in charge of the hat department from J. J. Newberry Co., will show the hats. A business session will be conducted by Mrs. Dorcas Donnelly, Grand Regent.

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