

Ancient Rite In Modern Garb

(Continued from page 1)

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council are convinced that the role of the priest and his ministers has up to now overestimated the role of the laity.

It is true that the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Rites of September 3, 1963, did insist on laity participation. Yet even when this instruction has been put into effect, the change of participation is somewhat accidental to the liturgical ritual — an excellent thing to achieve when it is possible, but something which all too frequently practical reasons force us to plan with or without.

The Constitution states that active participation must be adapted to the liturgical situation at hand. It must be determined how the very priest himself can be made to participate in the very liturgical action with-

standing the role of the celebrant. The celebrant is the one who presides at the liturgical assembly. He is the father of the Christian family gathered together to worship. His role is to lead, but not dominate the sacred action. Hence neither should he take all the parts nor should he duplicate the parts of the other participants.

Role of the Celebrant

This means of course that first of all we priests must have a very clear idea of what our own role is at the celebrant of the liturgical action. The celebrant is the one who presides at the liturgical assembly. He is the father of the Christian family gathered together to worship. His role is to lead, but not dominate the sacred action. Hence neither should he take all the parts nor should he duplicate the parts of the other participants.

He leads the assembly in many ways. He begins the assembly with the opening prayer and the Creed and continues them with the entire assembly. He is heard alone at the climactic moments he sums up the prayers of the faithful by saying the Collect, the secret and the post-communion of their behalf. He is the minister who breaks the bread for the people; the father of the family who breaks the bread for his children.

He sings the Great Preface, the Canon — to which all respond with the great Amen.

In general the celebrant must act in the center of his people — he should be close with them, he should share with them, he should be with them, he should be with them, he should be with them.

When he says "Domine vobiscum" he awaits their answer. When he says the "Gloria" he knows that all eyes are turned to him. He should be with them, he should be with them, he should be with them.

Priests Attend New-English Mass

Priests of the Rochester Diocese attended study days — one in Elmira and another at the cathedral in Rochester — to learn about the new English language Mass rite.

Bishop Kearney, in his program, said the era in which we live is "a time of transition." He pointed out that the Church is willing to adapt its customs to the needs of modern men while holding firmly to the doctrines and essential elements given by Jesus Christ.

"No change in language can change the fact that the heart and center of our liturgy is the real presence of our divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament," he said.

Monsignor James C. McManis, vice pastor, is shown as he read the Epistle at the Mass in English facing the congregation. Franks took part in the Mass by singing hymns at the altar of the Mass, at the offertory, the Communion and at its end, and by reading the responses — a pattern to be inaugurated in parish churches on Monday, Nov. 20, the first Monday of Advent.



leads, to guide, to inspire the other participants — knowing them that he is anxious to have their collaboration.

Nowhere is the celebrant's role more clearly or more subtly expressed than in article seven of the Constitution. This article, which may well be considered as the theological heart of the document, explains the different modes of Christ's presence in the liturgy. Significantly, it begins with the words: "In the person of the priest who celebrates the Mass, the faithful, looking at the priest, see the Christ."

The priest's way of celebrating the Mass — his actions, his gestures, his words — must be a convincing sign of the presence of Christ in the midst of his church — ministering to his people.

The Congregation

Understanding the role of the celebrant helps us to clarify the role of the congregation. The congregation, being by itself a body which is not to be confused with the celebrant and his ministers, this includes the responses and the people's parts (such as the Gloria, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei).

The Choir

The choir acts as a delegate of the congregation. Its role is to assist the congregation in doing for the congregation what the people cannot do themselves. Thus the proper chants of the Mass (Introit, gradual, Offertory and communion chants) would normally belong to the choir, but the choir must perform with the congregation and not in isolation from the people's role.

The Servers

Servers at Mass address a delegated office. Up to recently these roles had been two-fold: at times they have acted as delegates of the ministers of the Mass at times as the delegates of the congregation. Their role is to assist the celebrant in the performance of the Mass and to assist the congregation in its participation in the Mass. They are no longer to be seen as the celebrant's assistants, but as the celebrant's delegates.

This proper differentiation of function and distribution of roles will make the liturgical assembly appear as a genuine sign of the activity of the Church — a holy people made up of many members with a plurality of function.

Styly White — The Liturgy of the Word of God.

Cardinal Ritter Recommends

Week of Prayer for Unity

New York — (AP) — Cardinal Joseph Ritter of St. Louis has become the first Roman Catholic prelate in this country to write a special article for the annual observance of the World Council of Churches Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Writing the article, "Rebirth of the Church," which is the theme of the 1964 observance (Jan. 18-20), he said that the church of this world is in a "profoundly significant" state of transition.

"Evidence of renewal within the Church suggests to such a marked degree that we can see clearly that God is again presenting His people to make all things new," the cardinal wrote.

"In response to this outpouring of Divine Grace we do well to manifest our submission to the Father of us all, by joining in prayer for the unity which He wills."

The article was distributed by the World Council of Churches, which issued it in marked form last June. A member of the American Catholic hierarchy had contributed a statement to be used in connection with the Week.

Other articles will be written by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, chief executive officer of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and Archbishop Giovanni of New York, head of the Great Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America.

The WCO observance is held in cooperation with the National Council of Churches, Faith and Order Department in New York and the Association for Christian Unity in Lyons, France, founded by the late Abbe Paul Couturier. During the Week prayers are said for a number of related intentions, including Christian unity, better Jewish-Christian relations

and world peace.

The week coincides with the Catholic Feast of Unity, which originated in this country and is sponsored by the Protestant Friends of the Atomic Bomb, Garrison, N.Y. During this observance Catholics around the world also pray for the unity of Christians.

In his article, Cardinal Ritter said that if the prayer for unity and during the observance are to be "genuine," we must begin with an awareness of personal guilt for the sin of Christian disunity.

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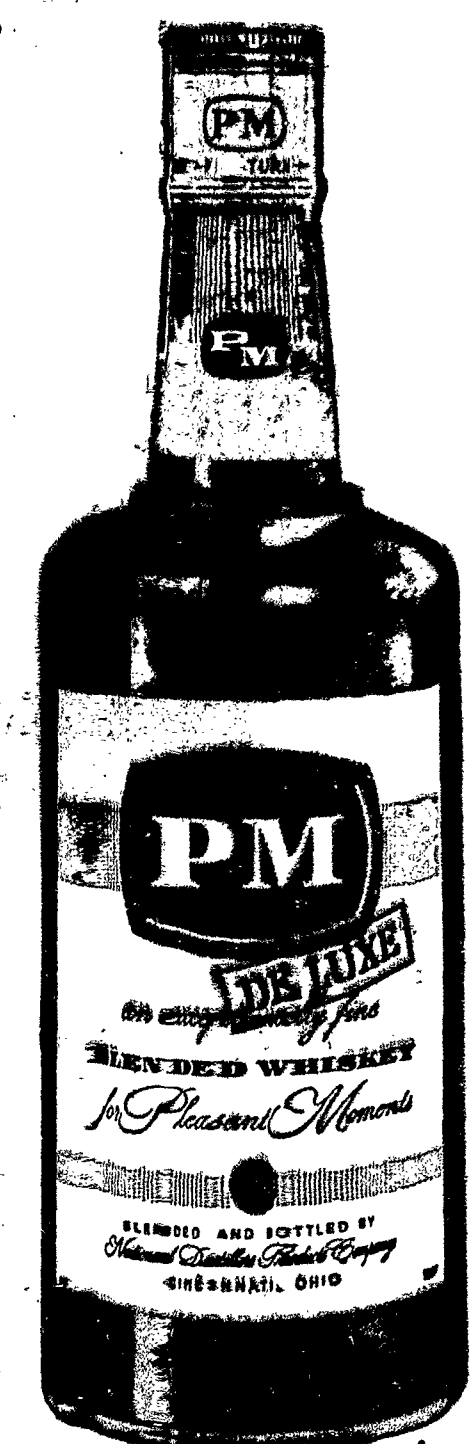
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