

Priests for Tomorrow

The Sacrifice Of the Mass

By FATHER LOUIS HOHMAN
Diocesan Director of Vocations

Occasionally someone will ask a priest or seminarian concerning his long years of training, "Does it take that long to learn how to say Mass?" Learning the mechanics of the Mass, of course, takes no more than several weeks, but the question does reveal a sort of intuition about what is the most important thing in a priest's life.

The priest is essentially a priest when he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for it is then that he is the Sacred Giver, the sacerdos.

It is in the Mass that he is the instrument of Christ's perfect, redemptive sacrifice, that he is the mediator between God and man in the here and now, the twentieth century.

TO UNDERSTAND this, it might be well to review the theology of the Mass. Jesus Christ came into the world to reconcile it and man with God. Man had disoriented himself from God and from the world by his deliberate rebellion, disobedience to God. He had rejected the will of God in favor of his own will. Jesus, from the very beginning of his life on earth would adhere perfectly to the will of His Heavenly Father.

That sacrifice of His will culminated in the perfect offering of His life on Calvary and because He was God-man, He undid the evil of man's sin and enabled man to be reconciled with God. But in order for that perfect sacrifice of Christ to have any effect in the lives of individual men they had to be joined to that sacrifice of Jesus.

They would have to offer their will in union with Him, give their total selves to God. Obviously this could not be done physically — Calvary is twenty centuries past. But the wisdom and the power of God devised a way in which all men of all times could join themselves to the sacrifice of Calvary.

He projected Calvary into time and space through the sacrifice of the Mass which is identical with Calvary, though the manner of offering is different and a human priest becomes the instrument of the offering.

Through the Mass, then, people of our time or any time can reach out to God and find His love and grace in and with Christ offering Himself through the instrumentality of the priest. Through Him and with Him and in Him is to Thee God the Father Almighty in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory. This we say

participation in the Sacrifice of Mass. It has been theorized that the large increase in the number of extra devotions, particularly novenas, was nothing more or less than the demand of the people that they have a bigger part in religious worship. Unfortunately it was a poor substitute for the greatest and central act of Christian worship.

What must be done? Priests must teach their people to enter as fully as possible into the august sacrifice. They must show them how they can prepare their minds and hearts for union with Christ by an absolutely intent hearing of the Word in the first part of the Mass.

Priests must show them how they must have love and solidarity with their fellow Christians and their fellow men as the condition for loving God. "If you come to the altar and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar, go first to be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift."

People must be taught that at Mass they are giving themselves body and soul to God. They must be taught over and over that Communion is the natural development of that love and makes complete their union with Jesus and with one another.

Finally, what is most important, priests must get across the idea that the offering we make at Mass is only the beginning and must be carried right back into the world with them — that they will be offering themselves all day and all week, that their lives will be sacrificial offerings of themselves in love to God and to one another, that THEY must redeem the world by making the Sacrifice of Christ effective in every nook and corner of their lives.

The Vatican Council has opened a glorious door to the priesthood of our time. It has given them the opportunity to expand vastly the dimensions of Christ's sacrifice for our time, to make their own priesthood more effective, more dynamic, more redemptive. God grant them the grace to do it.

It is essentially a love meeting between ourselves and God made possible by our Brother Jesus Christ. It is essential that there be a response of love on our part or the whole thing is meaningless at least as far as we are concerned.

HOW MANY times have people said, "I don't get anything out of it." How could they if they were not in a position to give themselves in an active, dynamic way? That is why the promotion of the new Liturgy is so important for both priests and people. In fact one could say without fear of being too far off that this would be the principal task of the priest of our time — to bring the people into active loving partici-

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CFM Founders Honored

Notre Dame, Ind. — (RNS) — Mr. and Mrs. Patrick F. Crowley of Wilmette, Ill., founders of the worldwide Christian Family Movement, receive the 1966 Lactare Medal from Father Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., president of Notre Dame University. Presented annually by Notre Dame to an outstanding American Catholic lay man or woman, the award was given to a couple for the first time this year. The Crowleys were honored for their dedication "in a truly apostolic spirit to the strengthening and invigoration of family life everywhere."

Democracy for Jesuits

By FATHER ROBERT A. GRAHAM, S.J.
Special Correspondent

Rome — (RNS) — A series of decisions tending to "democratize" and "decentralize" the Jesuit Order are now under consideration by its General Congregation or Chapter in session here.

The objective is to expand the basis of responsible participation in affairs of the order. This is in line with the directives of the Vatican Council and subsequent statements by Pope Paul VI which stress the importance of obtaining the fullest possible sharing by all members in the work of adapting religious communities to the conditions of modern times.

The General Congregation, which convened in early September, is the order's highest legislative assembly and comprises 25 delegates from all Jesuit provinces throughout the world.

Among decisions already reached, according to official information from the order's Rome headquarters, is one which authorizes discussion of

Communion From Nuns

Vatican City — (NC) — The Vatican has given bishops the faculty to allow mothers superior of convents to distribute Holy Communion to their communities when no priest is available.

A document called a "reserved instruction" issued by the Congregation of the Sacraments specifies that the ruling is intended primarily for mission lands where there is a great shortage of priests and applies when a priest is not available "for several days" and the time of his return is "uncertain."

A mother superior may give Communion in such cases both to herself and to members of her community, but she must do so in the convent chapel and not in public.

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major problems at the provincial or district level.

As a result of the vote, the local assemblies, or provincial congregations are now empowered to take up any questions of reform, and to propose action by a future general congregation. Hitherto, formal discussion and recording of opinions on such issues remained reserved for the Roman Chapter.

A companion proposal, however, which envisaged a more revolutionary change in the internal structure of the order, was referred to a study committee. This called for the elimination of the distinctions created by the founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, between various categories or grades of the order, with resulting differentiation of rights. The committee is required to submit a report on which the next general congregation could act.

A third proposal yet to be acted upon is a reform of the method for determining eligibility principally on the automatic basis of seniority.

The proposal had been pushed by what the Vatican Radio termed "a strong and very resolute minority" which called for an immediate and radical aboli-

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Legion of M

By GERARD Mc...

"The people who lieve the people who the old, the dying, erible, the depressed body... We must cened! We must r others as the Blessed saw her Son." So sp Columban Father W McGrath to the four members of the Legion attending the Legion's last weekend at Nazareth.

Father McGrath is travelling across America rapid pace; he is a busy man.

There was little m the fact that he was by the Chinese Comm he was imprisoned by two years and eight under circumstances o others around him out mids.

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