

Feedback from the Underground

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one idea of prayer and another of Church music, and the one does not include or relate to the other. Another disarming frank member of the underground admitted: "I think prayer, to a great extent, is phony — just a lot of memorized repetition." Curiously she qualified this by explaining that "somehow, when I sing, I think more about what I'm saying."

The problem of spirituality was explained by one chaplain who stated that unsuccessful congregational singing results "where it is simply the substitution of a new routine of singing for an old routine of not singing." Thus the work to be done, a teaching Sister said, is one of creating "an interior spirit of unity among the people which will then result in a more spontaneous desire to sing God's praises together."

The spirituality of this renewal is one which must spring from the essentially Christian sense of man's oneness or community in the saving Christ. It could be called, in fact, the true fulfillment of the modern, secular groping for human community as it is revealed in so many factors of 20th-century life.

Communism, for example, has enjoyed staggering success in providing a community of common ideals and goals for millions of adherents. The century has given birth to a world consciousness radically different from the exclusive nationalism and opportunism of another era. The social amelioration of our fellow men has come to be regarded more and more as the responsibility of all. Existentialist thought has also given us a fresh sense both of what it is to be a person and what it is to live in a community of persons.

In the renewal of our worship a similar sense of community is at the heart of liturgical spirituality, one which flows from an awareness, moreover, of what it is to be God's people.

What must be fixed firmly in each mind is the awareness that we are truly this community of God's people worshipping together our common Father, with Christ and through the Spirit even as we are joined visibly and actively under the presidency of the celebrating priest. One college senior expressed the point in this way: "People want to participate more in the Mass than they did in the past — this brings us away from the dull, cold way of praying the Mass by burying our noses in a missal or by falling asleep while listening to a dead language."

In the new liturgy we no longer "attend" Mass, we participate. We are active because we each have a role to perform in and for the community. "In taking part I know what's going on," is the way a twelve year old girl expressed it. Our congregational singing can have the same dynamic force as the great shout of the Jews when commanded by Joshua outside the walls of Jericho. Through its help the walls of indifference, individualism and apathy which separate us from one another can come tumbling down. We become a community.

Really Turn You On?

Much of what has been said so far pertains to the problem of the changing liturgical mentality. When we come down to the manner in which the liturgy is actually performed, then the underground voices resemble the confusion of Babel. Differences of age, ethnic and regional backgrounds, of musical tastes, are all critical human



factors in approaching the music and texts. The teen-ager has an emotional posture and a religious spirit radically different from those of the adult.

The music which the young adult legitimately prefers both in church and elsewhere is apt to be far removed from the standard which the professional church musician, for example, might want to establish as the norm for divine worship.

Such diversity was recognized by the Council. "Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community (Constitution on the Liturgy, n. 37)."

The U.S. Bishops' Commission on the Liturgical Apostolate has specified the meaning of this principle by calling for new compositions "in idioms that can be sung by the congregation" and "in different styles of musical expression" which will be meaningful for different groups of people. It then went on to approve the adaptation of such idioms and styles for youth groups of high school and college ages.

The only provisions are that the music have that elusive quality called "merit," that the instruments be played "in a manner that is suitable for public worship," and that "incongruous melodies and texts" be avoided.

What are some of the specific questions raised by the underground?

It is obvious that a way must be found to help worshippers of all ages bridge the gap between what is sung publicly in the liturgy and what is felt (or even not felt) within the spirit of the person, between the world of daily life. Here is the crux of the problem raised.

The response of the worshipper follows no discernible pattern, however. A research scientist showed a preference for a liturgical experience through

texts and tunes identical with the musical preference of the average student because "of their spiritual quality." One priest explained his aesthetic preference for hymns in the style of the chorale in language which is almost the same as a collegian's when stating his preference for the folk song type.

Each of them finds in the hymns he prefers the same experience of the greatness and majesty of God. One woman gave a nostalgic answer, the genuine plaint of so many, when asked about her preference: "hymns to the Blessed Mother seem to be out." All that is predicatable in any gathering in a parish church is that the child remains brightly open when asked to sing. A Grade 5 boy said: "I like a mixture, tradition and familiar, and I enjoy folk Masses."

The word of mouth has much to say about the whole matter of congregational singing. The comments vary, but a good number think that it is an imitation of Protestant worship. Too many find that congregational singing in our churches is causing real anguish to too many parishioners. "About the only thing I am sharing with the community in my parish is the agony of trying to sing some of those horrible hymns," exclaimed one man.

Nowhere is the pain apt to be expressed more stridently than in a discussion of organs, the generally poor quality of their training and performance, and their inexperience with congregational accompaniment. Many would like to have this officially declared a diocesan disaster area.

Banjos on their Knees

Now that the use of guitars in churches has become less startling attitudes to it should become more realistic. A sound approach was shown by a monk

who noted that "if properly used, as a genuine musical instrument, the guitar is extremely beautiful," and he indicated that it was ideal for the accompaniment of psalms.

A caution was added, however, by one parish priest: "in the right setting and circumstances both the guitar and a folksong type of congregational hymn would be very acceptable. Right now their use for the ordinary congregation would be too novel." Indeed, the use of the guitar might not be either helpful or meaningful for a large, mixed congregation.

The alchemy of word of mouth is honest too in recognizing genuine effort in the preparation and execution of good congregational song. "Where there is an imaginative and inventive choice of hymns and some effort made to enable the congregation to learn new hymns and achieve confidence in hearing themselves sing," said an experienced priest, "it has been most successful."

One citizen who is a "migrant worshipper" on Sunday mornings appraised the situation: "The diocese should hire a 'roving coach' — such as the one who appeared at the Cathedral when the new organ was dedicated just before the Mass. Never was such singing sung so sincerely or better by the same sleepy taxpayers who hummed through 'The Rock of Ages' a week before!"

The underground's word of mouth is clearly saying something to those in charge of musical activity in the diocese. The remaining articles of this series will make an honest effort to find out what, and point the way towards a eucharistic celebration of congregational song wherein "the whole body of the faithful may be able to contribute that active participation which is rightly theirs (Constitution on the Liturgy, n. 114)."

Canterbury, Rome Talks Start Soon

Vatican City — (RNS) — The first meeting of the joint preparatory committee set up to inaugurate "serious dialogue" between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican communions will take place Jan. 9-13 at Gazzada, near Varese, in northern Italy.

Vatican officials announced the date shortly after publication of the names of the 11 Anglicans and ten Catholics named to the committee. The Anglican-Catholic dialogue for which preparations are being made was agreed upon in a joint declaration issued last March by Pope Paul VI and Dr. Arthur Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In this statement — climaxing a historic meeting here of the Pope and the Anglican Primates — plans were announced for "a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to the unity in truth for which Christ prayed."

Catholic members of the joint preparatory committee include Bishop Jan Willebrands, secretary of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and Bishop Charles H. Dolan, of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Mo., a member of the secretariat.

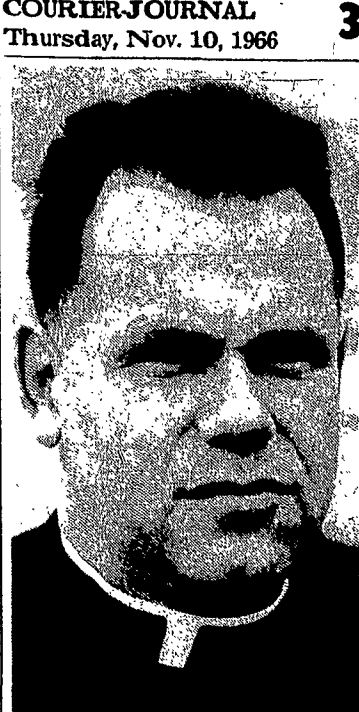
Among the Anglican members are Bishop John Moorham of Ripon, England, who was the senior Anglican delegate observer throughout Vatican II Council, Dr. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., professor of liturgics at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, Calif., and bishops from Wales, Ceylon and South Africa.

A Vatican Radio announcement said "past history will not figure prominently in the Gazzada talks, and the committee will try to agree on priorities for issues to be discussed in the dialogue."

The station said sub-committees probably would be established to deal with special problems, such as mixed marriages and other questions on which the Churches disagree.

Priests Back Students

Barcelona — (NC) — Priests here have published an open letter giving support to a recent unauthorized student demonstration held in the University of Barcelona's law school.



Noted Speaker

Augustinian Father Gregory Baum, controversial priest from Toronto, will speak at Colgate Rochester Divinity School Thursday, Nov. 17, at 1 p.m., and at St. Agnes High School auditorium that same evening at 8 p.m. Tickets available free at the Divinity School weekdays prior to the talks, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A reception for Father Baum, a member of the Vatican Secretariat for Religious Unity, will be held at the Divinity School following his evening lecture. The public is invited.

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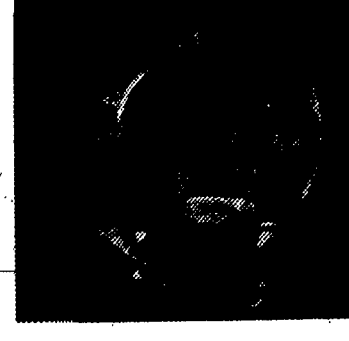
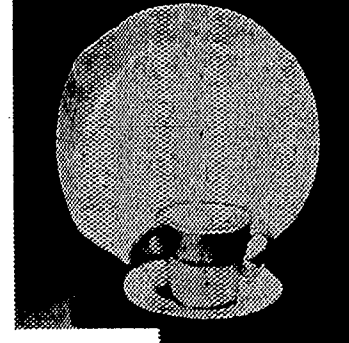
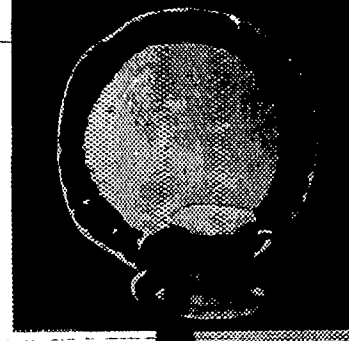
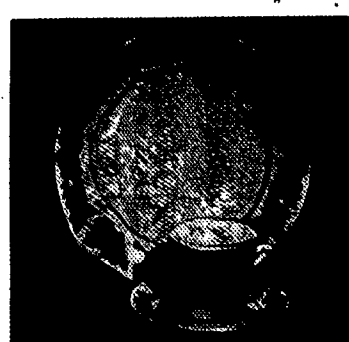
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New Morality Denounced

Charleston — (RNS) — The ultra-fundamentalist American Council of Christian Churches at its 25th anniversary convention here, adopted a resolution denouncing the "false philosophy of the new morality" and calling for a strict adherence to moral standards as set forth in the Bible.

Another ACCC resolution protested "use of tax money to promote the religious interest of theological liberalism." It expressed concern over books critical of the Bible being accepted at state universities and public schools "under the guise of the objective study of the Bible as literature."



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