

You Won't Hear Latin at Mass Anymore

By FATHER FREDERICK R. McMANUS
(NC News Service)

Jesus said, Go and make disciples of all the nations.

Twenty centuries later, so much still to do, one wonders . . .

Mission Work — Is it Worth it?

Mission Sunday for me stirs thoughts not only of missionaries in distant lands but also nostalgic thoughts of long-ago days when nuns at St. Ambrose school inducted us to numerous prayers and acts of mortification "for the missions."

I don't know whether children in parochial schools are still similarly taught but I know we were quite convinced that each prayer and each act of self-denial somehow, somewhere had an immediate cash value off in the missions.

Later I remember hearing stories, often grim, as that about the Jesuit martyrs Isaac Jogues, John Brebeuf and their companions, victims of the Iroquois, or other stories of more recent but just as intrepid missionaries like Father Damien, the priest who gave his life in service to the lepers.

Bishop Sheen, of course, brought the mission story to adult audiences whose totals ran into the millions.

Today, however, I sense an ennui about the missions.

Despite all the prayers and contributions, of past years, the missions seem to be still in as desperate a plight as ever, progress seems to be so negligible compared to the need and one is tempted to ask, "What's the use?"

The Overseas Mission Review in its autumn issue poses the question this way — "Whose fault is it that so many still do not accept the Christian faith?"

The fault, it says, is multiple. "It's their fault," says the Review article, admitting "this may not be a charitable way to begin but if we are going to be realistic we must face unlovely facts in others as well as in our selves."

There is an irrational cussedness in all of us humans — not less in those who are not Christians. Not everybody wants what's best for them — even as to their material way of life, much less their spiritual. We all have a strange instinct to refuse something we really know is to our advantage — parents and children, husbands and wives, friends, sweethearts all can testify to that.

We're also all of us a bit of a coward — reluctant to open our minds to a belief or a value or even a person we're not already acquainted with. Most of us are also quite content with what we've got.

People who are not Christians are, it seems, quite content with what they've already got—their temples and customs and creeds, and many of them are, we must admit, very attractive and satisfying, although this contentment in biblical language would be more bluntly termed, from our present viewpoint, idol-worship.

And then there is the problem today of people whose minds are blunted by modern communications which explode a thousand new ideas in front of them daily. There are so many items clamoring for attention that a new religion from a foreign country or from a strange envoy just doesn't capture the attention of most people in mission lands.

Jesus Himself must have sensed this insulation, reluctance of the people to His "good news" when He wept over the Holy City, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if only you had known those things that are for your peace . . ."

But certainly the fault is not theirs alone. We Christians claim we have the answer, the power — that our faith has in it something that is convincing, compelling.

But we can't even agree among ourselves. We squabble and bicker with each other. We are at this moment divided into more than 250 competing denominations in the United States — more brands of Christianity than there are brands of cigarettes.

We go to the people of Japan, India and Africa with European labels—Dutch Reformed, German Lutheran, Church of England, Roman Catholic — and wonder why they are reluctant to welcome us.

We proclaim a message of peace and we contradict our message by waging wars nation against nation, race against race, even creed against creed.

Even in our personal lives we seldom reveal an inner peace which certainly ought to characterize a person who has a sincere faith, an abiding hope and an all-embracing charity.

The outlook, nonetheless, is not at all as bleak as it may seem.

Holy Ghost missionary Father Vincent J. Donovan who has worked ten years in East Africa, on a recent furlough home to the United States, told about a conversation he had with about 50 Masai elders just before his departure.

He told them he was going to visit his home but would soon return to Africa. He hadn't been in their area as yet and asked them if they would be interested in learning about Christianity, if he came back and talked to them about God.

"We would be very interested," one of the elders replied, "Why have you waited so long to come to us?"

So despite our many faults which undoubtedly will continue to plague both them and us as long as we are all of us human, there remains a vast opportunity. Something else Jesus once said is still true — "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest."

I guess the nuns at St. Ambrose were right after all.

—Father Henry A. Atwell

of kinds of liturgical defects once known only to scholars. The Canon is complex and disjointed; it is, for example, repetitive of the theme of offering at the expense of the theme of praise and thanksgiving.

No translation, however noble and effective, can solve all problems. And this is still another test of the new Canon. As priests speak it and people listen to it — for it is written for spoken use, not for people to read from the printed page — the need for study and reflection will be evident.

The May 29 Instruction on the eucharistic usage was principally concerned with the better popular appreciation of the Eucharist which the Christian community celebrates. It is a good start for catechetical and

other efforts to get a fresh start in liturgical renewal.

The text of the new Canon — or "eucharistic prayer," as it is better called — is another starting point. It may be illustrated and explained by the May Instruction; its phrases indicate the chief themes to be understood.

The Eucharist is an act of joyful praise of God, of thanks and blessing — but blessing in the sense that we bless God, we praise His works and thank Him, and so we too are blessed. This primacy of the "sacrifice of praise" will be restored if the entire eucharistic prayer — from the dialogue of acclamations through the concluding Amen of the people — is seen as a unit. Then the thanks and praise expressed in the preface

and taken up in the remembrance of the Lord's Supper ("The day before He suffered He took bread, and looking up to heaven, to you, His almighty Father, He gave you thanks and praise.") will get the attention they deserve.

The present Canon is one of many used in the Church today and it has its own particular emphasis, for example, the very long lists of saints and the prayers of petition and intercession. Many will regret that the abbreviations — omitting, for example, some of the saints' names and some of the Amens which break up the unity of the eucharistic prayer — were not agreed to by the Holy See, although proposed by many hierarchies.

Yet the Roman Canon pro-

claims clearly that the Eucharist which the Church celebrates is sacrifice, memorial, and meal — the very point made in the recent instruction. That it is a sacrificial offering is explicit both in the eucharistic prayer and in the prayer over the gifts which precedes it; that it is the Church's act of sacrifice is just as explicit: "We, your people and your ministers . . . offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice . . ."

Much reflection is needed on the Eucharist as the memorial or remembrance of the passion and glorification of Jesus — His death, resurrection, and ascension, which we call the "paschal mystery." This was a central theme of the council's Constitution on the Liturgy, as was the presence and action of Christ in the liturgical celebration.

"Remembrance" as more than recollection or mere memory is hard to express. The new English canon uses words like "recall His passion" and "celebrate the memory" to suggest the point. The celebration of the Eucharist in the community of believers — the "faithful" — is real and actual: it is Christian faith that the paschal mystery is not over and done with, like past history.

That the eucharistic sacrifice is a meal is evident in the ritual of the Last Supper narrative, simply and movingly translated in the new text. Because in the Mass the breaking of bread and the act of communion are postponed, a false distinction may arise. The institution of the Lord is a ritual meal that is both sacrifice and memorial. It is a meal that celebrates the new alliance or covenant between God and man achieved in the blood of Jesus.

Such observations can only hint at the doctrine which should be a little better appreciated from using the English Canon. But it is an incomplete development — no single prayer can cover all the facets of the mystery to be proclaimed. This is one reason for the announcement of new, alternative Canons or eucharistic prayers soon to be made official.

These developments, some almost immediate, others still being studied, will be greeted with enthusiasm by some and with dismay by others. The latter with reason see revisions as too little and too late. Even the new Canon in English, for all its effectiveness, means little to the indifferent and disenchanted.

The key is in the goodness of what is being accomplished, the hope that even the limited projects may open the way to cultural adaptation of the liturgy. Meanwhile no one should fail to appreciate the progress marked by the Canon in English and the opportunities it gives to laity and clergy for a better celebration of the Eucharist.



Mass is now said in over 200 languages around the world. A younger generation will grow up hearing the rite in their own language instead of Latin. This Sunday, in the United States, English will replace Latin in the Canon of the Mass. Other countries are planning to make a similar changeover within the next few months.

Abortion's Hazards

By THOMAS R. SWEENEY, M.D.
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"That there is a substantial risk that the continuance of the pregnancy would result in physical or mental abnormalities which would cause physical or mental handicaps to the child if it were born." So reads New York Senate 1562 of the 1967 session, "an act to amend the Public Health Law in relation to therapeutic abortion." A similar bill is to be introduced in 1968.

In previous articles we have taken up abortion from the standpoint of the legal rights of the fetus (April 14) and the complications encountered in the performance of an abortion (June 2). Now, let us consider some of the reasons which, under the proposed law, would be grounds for a "legal" abortion.

The quotation with which this article began can be summarized as follows: "There is a substantial risk that the child will be born with physical or mental defect." A recent example of a disease causing such defects is the German measles epidemic of 1964-65, especially those cases

occurring in a woman in the first three months of her pregnancy.

Eastman's "Obstetrics," a text book we have mentioned in previous articles, states that "in women infected with rubella (German measles) during the first trimester (three months) of pregnancy there is an overall risk of fetal abnormality of about 20 per cent . . . This bald statistic lacks meaning in that it fails to delineate the type or severity of the malformation and more significantly it does not discriminate between the period of maximal risk during early organogenesis (formation of organs of the fetus) and the time of greatly reduced risk after the twelfth week of pregnancy . . ."

The risk of producing a malformed child is greatest during the first four weeks of pregnancy, approaching 60 per cent. It falls rapidly and progressively to about 7 per cent at the thirteenth to sixteenth weeks. The place of therapeutic abortion in these cases is one of the most difficult and controversial of modern obstetric problems."

Dr. J. L. McKelvey, professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Minnesota, cites studies showing the real risk of one or more severe, disabling lesions (abnormalities) in the surviving child of a woman with rubella (German measles) in the first trimester (three months) is only 7 to 10 per cent. He notes, however, that the risk to the fetus seems to vary in different rubella epidemics.

Writing in his state medical journal, Dr. McKelvey asks, "Do I have the right to kill a considerable number of developing humans who are normal in order to get rid of the painful problems of the occasional child who is born alive with an abnormality which may be minor or severe?"

"Do I indeed," Dr. McKelvey further asks, "have the right to kill a human, developing or developed, because it has an abnormality?"

"It is perhaps absurd to suggest a compromise. If one believes that he is justified in destroying a child because it has an abnormality, would it not be better to give legal blessing to waiting until the babies are born on term, letting those who are normal survive and handling the abnormal ones with a hammer since they are now too big for a curet (surgical instrument)?"

Dr. McKelvey calls this a "horrible thought" but asks, "Isn't it really more sensible

and humane than indiscriminate destruction of the normals and abnormal, the so-called King Pharaoh technique? If I were a normal fetus at risk, I should certainly think so."

Dr. Robert Hall of Columbia University in testimony before a committee of the New York State Legislature on the subject of therapeutic abortion, estimated that 1400 abortions were done in 1964 in New York State for German measles alone. The news media do not report that the percentage of abnormal fetuses in that group was approximately 20 per cent.

Looking at this another way, approximately 1120 (80 per cent) of the pregnancies that he stated were aborted would otherwise have gone on to the delivery of healthy, normal babies. I quote Dr. McKelvey and Dr. Hall not to shock the reader but to illustrate that a doctor can be subject to error as well as any other human being even when he feels he is rendering the most modern scientific treatment. To kill four normal fetuses in order to eliminate the one abnormal one is, as Dr. McKelvey, infra., a method of management which is hardly scientific. Yet our legislators are being asked to legalize such methods of treatment.

Congress Seeks to Define Role of Laity

By GARY MacEOIN

The third world congress of the lay apostolate has brought to Rome 2,500 delegates, advisers and observers this past week, Oct. 11-18, to confront issues as basic as those concurrently before the Synod of Bishops. After a general survey of the present condition of mankind, a kind of progress report on human movement towards the divinely ordained ends of creation, the congress has tried to determine the role of the laity in the renewal of the Church.

As recently as the second congress ten years ago, the question would have been a routine one, for which a routine answer was ready. Lay people did not have a specific independent function. The ones charged to continue Christ's work were the bishops. If the layman had an obligation (which was not too clear), it was only when summoned by the bishop to help him. He worked under the bishop's control, both as regards the tasks he performed and the method of performance.

I think that is a fair description of Catholic Action as developed in the 1920s

and 1930s, and as it still is institutionalized. The present congress itself is not an assembly representative of the Catholic laity as such, still less of the people of God, but one representative only of Catholic Action as an executive extension of the hierarchy. I suspect that some clerical delegates wanted to keep it that way. I shall, however, be surprised if they succeed for long.

For one thing, Catholic Action is proving less and less viable. Where it has achieved a real channeling of popular feeling, it has developed an internal dynamism often in conflict with institutional conservatism. France, for example, has had one crisis after another since the war, each resolved only by wholesale withdrawal of members to found independent organizations devoted to promoting social progress. Spain has had open warfare for the past year between the bishops and large sectors of Catholic action.

In the United States we have avoided trouble by avoiding action. The organizations are paper tigers. The best elements remain aloof.

Paralleling this experience is the testimony of Vatican II. In its documents one finds a very different conception of the role and function of the layman. They assert a positive and primary right and duty of every Christian, by virtue of his incorporation into Christ through baptism, to participate actively in spreading Christ's kingdom. We speak of the coming of age of the layman, but the Council's idea is more profound. It affirms the personality of every Christian, with his consequent dignity and freedom of decision as a human person.

The Church, it seems to me, will now have to determine what place (if any) official Catholic Action as a mobilization of the laity under the orders and responsibility of the hierarchy has in the world of Vatican II. I do not know the answer, but I suspect it may be that in our pluralist world, there is plenty of room for official and non-official Catholic organizations, as well as organizations in which Catholics will join those of other beliefs or of none in promoting human progress towards the goals of creation.

An even more basic issue is, I suspect, posed for the congress. Should it continue to call itself and to operate as a lay apostolate? According to Vatican II, the call to the apostolate is to the Christian as such, not to the layman or the cleric. The continuing distinction between the two groups, like the functional relationship enshrined in Catholic Action, is a carry-over from a class society. As pastoral priests are becoming aware in increasing numbers, it is an obstacle to their work in a professional society.

The issue is one that should have merited a joint session of the Congress of the Laity and the Synod of Bishops. The logic of the argument seems to point in the direction of a fusion of the two bodies. Such a result would not shock other Christian bodies, least of all the Orthodox with whom Pope Paul was recently visiting. For them lay participation in a synod is normal, an expression of the earliest Christian tradition. I suspect, nevertheless, that we need a little more time to get used to it.

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