

Mini-Mass, Pattern for Parishes?

Cape Town, South Africa — (NC) — A recent demonstration Mass in the Vatican dubbed the "mini-Mass" by a critic was defended here by a South African prelate, who said he was "profoundly moved and impressed" by it.

Referring to the Mass celebrated in the Sistine Chapel in connection with the world Synod of Bishops in October, Oblate missionary, Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban said it was "unfortunate" that the caustic term had been applied to it and widely repeated.

"Some disgruntled bishop may have used it, but whether it was justified I leave to your readers to judge," the archbishop wrote to the Southern Cross, the national Catholic weekly for South Africa published here. He explained in generally approving phrases what he had observed at the Mass.

"The alleged mini-Mass was celebrated in the Sistine Chapel

as a demonstration of what the future Mass could be like in a parish where there is some interest in sacred music and some capacity to render it.

It was celebrated in Italian. The singing was done by a cantor with a good voice and a choir of seminarians. With moderate effort such a singer could be found and such a choir put together in any parish counting 300 families.

"The Mass opened with a very beautiful entrance chant in responsorial form. We all joined in singing the response or antiphon repeated after each verse of a series of five or six psalm verses.

"The celebrant then addressed to us a formula of greeting and led us in a short act of repentance.

"We sang the Kyrie in Italian, but not the Gloria. It is likely that there will be a choice between these two in the future, so as not to have too much

singing at the beginning of a Mass.

"The liturgy of the word consisted of three short readings — one from the Old Testament, one from an Epistle, one from the Gospel. Between the first two we sang a responsorial psalm led by the cantor. Before the second and third we sang an Alleluia in response to two psalm verses.

"We listened to a short homily, recited the Creed and replied to the Prayer of the Faithful.

"The offering, or preparation of the gifts, was short as all the present offertory prayers were omitted. (They are not likely to be kept in the Mass of the future because too many of their expressions anticipate the Consecration.) During the Of-

feratory we joined in a responsorial chant.

"A beautiful new preface was sung by the celebrant, after which he recited in Italian one of the new anaphoras or canons that we are likely to be using soon.

"We sang the Our Father in Italian and the Agnus Dei. The celebrant's prayers before Communion were reduced to one.

"During the Communion a responsorial chant was sung followed by a short silence and a hymn of thanksgiving.

"The Mass ended with the blessing and dismissal of a recessional hymn.

"If this was a 'mini-Mass' what will a 'Maxi' be like? The Mini took 45 minutes.

"I suppose the disgruntled critic felt lonely for the Gloria, the silent Offertory prayers and the three silent prayers before Communion.

"I was profoundly moved and impressed until the end — when they sang the Italian recessional hymn to the tune of 'Nearer my God to Thee.' It was a bit treacherous after the good music that had preceded it.

"This kind of Mass is known as the 'Missae normative' — a sort of model Mass of moderate solemnity. Most of the English-language bishops maintained that it had too much singing and so was unrealistic as a norm or model for the average parish. But who knows? Even the English-speaking Catholics may be singing before the turn of the century."

There are many questions still to be answered about the permanent diaconate concerning training, the types of work deacons might perform to earn their livelihood, and whether there would be stable, well-formed laymen who would be willing to make the sacrifices necessary to function as a deacon in "no priest land," Father Berson admitted.

At present canon law does not permit the appointment of a deacon as pastor, but Father Berson said he believes the canons could be modified if the plan proves practical.

"Married deacons would be well accepted as churchmen in the South," the Glenmary superior said, "because of the strong Protestant tradition that prevails. As a matter of fact, the community at large would find a married deacon much easier to accept than a celibate priest."

On the other hand, Father Berson said he believes the Catholic community would have a little more of a problem.

"But I believe," he added, "that these people could be brought to a realization of the advantages of a married deacon as pastor and could be oriented toward the idea."

Harrisburg — (RNS) — The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, spokesman for the eight Roman Catholic dioceses in the state, has opposed "Torak Plan" compromise on state aid to parochial schools. It also rejected the shared time idea and the various types of cooperative or direct aid for materials and facilities.

The compromise was offered by Rep. Joseph L. Torak (R-Montgomery) as a substitute for H. 1136, the purchase of educational services bill which many legislators now consider dead.

Rep. Torak's proposal would provide for \$1 million in public funds for this purpose during the remainder of the current school year.

"Moreover, it denies aid to any school which provides recognition of conscientious religious choice. Presumably, therefore, it could not apply to most Catholic, or Orthodox Jewish schools."

Father Berson added: "The priest would come in to offer Mass, to administer the sacrament of Penance and take care

of other things which were specifically priestly functions."

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Deacons May Ease Priest Shortage

By STEVE LANDREGAN

Dallas — (NC) — The Glenmary Home Missioners have taken on a big job — populating the 700 counties which make up "no priest land, U.S.A." — but their youthful superior general said he envisions more help on the way in the form of married deacons.

Father Robert C. Berson, 43, Glenmary's third superior general, said married deacons are one of the answers to the challenge of taking the Church to "no priest land's" 40,000,000 citizens.

Pope Paul last June 27 published a document re-establishing the permanent diaconate. It included a provision for the ordination to the diaconate of married men over the age of 35.

In an interview here Father Berson expressed his feelings concerning the need for married deacons, particularly in the home mission field.

He said he was delighted with the document. "It was short," he added, "yet it covered the essentials, and most significant, it allowed for a married deacon to support himself by an occupation that is not incompatible with the sacred ministry."

"My first reaction," he added, "was 'let's try it somewhere in the home mission field.' I think until we try it we can't really pronounce any kind of a prudent judgment or evaluation on its effectiveness."

Father Berson, a veteran of many years in the home missions, said his society has discovered many missionary needs in the home missions don't require a priest.

"What I'm thinking of is one priest circuit-riding over about an eight-county area. In each of the local parishes there would be a resident married deacon as administrator. He would stay in the community, live there, earn his living there, raise his family there and be the official Catholic churchman in that town," he said.

Father Berson added: "The priest would come in to offer Mass, to administer the sacrament of Penance and take care

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No Compromise On Schools

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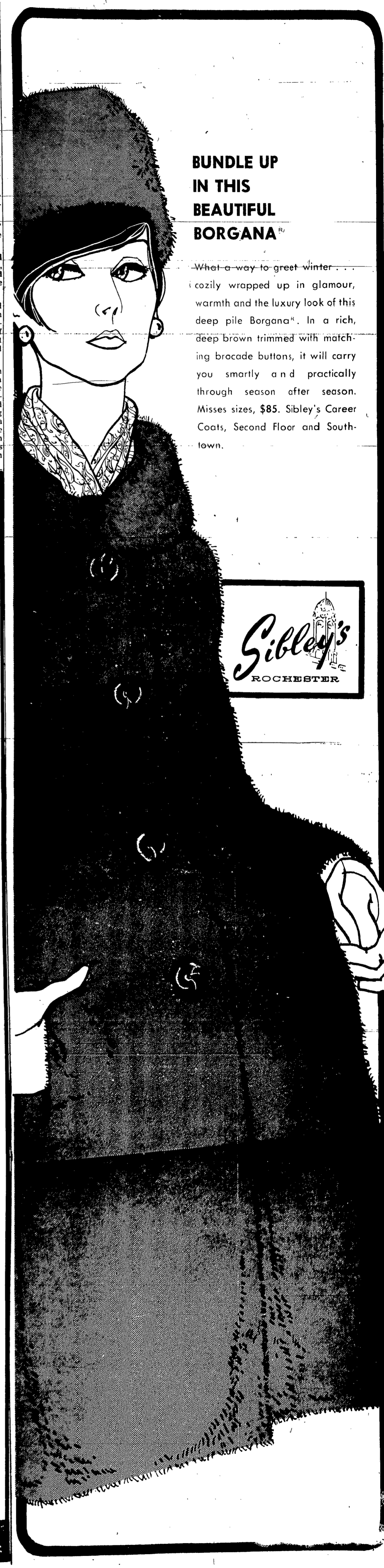
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