



Sunday morning greetings at St. Patrick's Church, Owego, always involve the priests of the parish meeting the congregation at the front steps after Mass. Here Father John DeKuff, center, speaks to parishioners after proceeding from the altar to the front door as the priests do after each Sunday Mass. Father Leo Matuszewski, pastor, is in a conversation at the right. The accompanying article, by a syndicated writer, was prompted when he attended Mass at St. Pat's on a Sunday-morning trip through Owego.

## Growing Custom with Priests: Greeting People After Mass

### Catholic Press Features

The priest gave the final blessing after the Sunday 10 a.m. Mass, and then—to the surprise of several new parishioners—briskly strode up the aisle, and out the front door. When the puzzled newcomers got outside, they found him—still fully vested—chatting amiably with a man and his wife, with several other parishioners standing by to talk with the priest next.

This scene—which most Catholics associate with the Protestant Church—is being repeated in more and more Catholic parishes as the practice of greeting parishioners after Mass is taken up by a growing number of priests.

The practice is expected to be spurred on by the increased sense of "community" in the Catholic Church—with closer relations between priests and parishioners—and by liturgical changes which make the gesture more practical.

"Our liturgy now is much less rigid than before, when leaving the altar by the shortest way was the rule," commented one priest who has been greeting parishioners after Mass for the past three years. "The priest was supposed to make his personal thanksgiving right after Mass. With our walk down the aisle now, there is no time for personal prayer after Mass, but I feel a lot more good is derived."

Another priest, who has been greeting parishioners ever since his ordination six years ago, thinks that the practice will grow as the Church abandons its "get 'em in, get 'em out" approach to Sunday Mass.

"The whole liturgy situation until now has been so impersonal that Masses have become dealing with a crowd instead of a community. Now we are finally seeing that there is a value in trying a personal approach to our in-personal congregations—and greeting parishioners on Sundays is one of the ways."

Some priests have found that getting out and talking with their parishioners after Mass is one way to put faces at Mass (which one priest described as "a massive blur") into focus as individuals.

"And this works two ways," said a 29-year-old priest. "I soon learned after ordination three years ago that priests are a mystery to people. We're from Mars. Unless we see them and let them see us, we'll never make it in the parishes."

"We enter the priesthood to be a walking sign of the Gospels, and then we remove ourselves from the people who are supposed to read us. At least when they come to Mass on Sunday, they should have the chance to say hello."

The priests' contact with the parishioners after Mass ranges from a simple "Good morning, how are you?" to a

confidential request by a troubled person for an appointment, particularly someone who would not normally go to the rectory "cold."

Also, one priest observed, "I find that people use this occasion to ask us the many little questions which puzzle them about the faith, but which seem too trivial to them to make a special call to the rectory."

"The meeting after Mass does serve as an occasion for people to open discussion on more complicated matters," he added. "I handle this by carrying my appointment book with me and making on-the-spot appointments for more detailed treatment of involved problems. I recall being introduced to at least two future converts on the church steps. They called me subsequently for instructions."

But "small talk" can be just as important. "A compliment on a job promotion or on a new baby means a lot to people," as one of the priests put it. Other priests have remarked that new people will often introduce themselves to a priest who is standing with them after Mass and ask how to register in the parish.

## Ohio Native Named Athletic Director At McQuaid High

Timothy Jordan has been named director of athletics at McQuaid Jesuit High School, Rev. Eugene A. Zimpher, S.J., moderator of athletics, has announced.

Jordan, a native of Mansfield, Ohio, graduated from Wooster College, Wooster, Ohio. Last year he was both teacher and coach at St. Peter's High School in Mansfield, and helped coach the varsity basketball team to

the Ohio Class A State Championship.

He will begin his regular duties as physical education instructor, jayvee basketball coach and varsity baseball coach this fall.

Assisting Jordan will be Leo Hand of Webster. He will act as physical instructor, jayvee football coach and jayvee baseball coach. Hand attended Dayton University, Dayton, Ohio, and Kansas State at Emporia, Kan.

## Non-Violence Definition

Tivoli, N.Y. — (RNS)—"Non-violence is meant to communicate love not in word but in act," according to Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk-author.

In a paper sent here to the fifth annual Pax Conference on Peace and Revolution, he explained, "Non-violence, as Gandhi understood it, is a kind of language."

"Above all," he declared, non-violence is meant to convey and to defend truth which has been obscured and defiled by political double-talk.

"The half-truth that only force is efficacious may turn out to be one of the most dangerous illusions of our time."

"Never was it more necessary," he concluded, "to understand the importance of genuine non-violence as a power for real change because it is aimed not so much at revolution as at conversion."

The three-day conference was held at the Catholic Worker farm here with more than 125 participants coming from various parts of the U.S. and Canada.

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## Art Gallery to Show 'Sister City' Works

Exhibitions of paintings and sculptures from European sister cities, and displays of portraits to be added to a permanent collection, will be featured at the grand opening of the Memorial Art Gallery, Aug. 17-20.

The opening ceremonies, which follow weeks of renovation and enlargement, will begin at 2 p.m., Aug. 17, at a dedication on the Memorial grounds.

Public opening of the exhibition will be from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 20.

The main feature of the inaugural exhibition will be the Gallery's own collection, with additions from sister cities in Europe.

Rennes, France, will present drawings and paintings from the 16th to 19th centuries. Wunburg, Germany, has contributed watercolors, prints, drawings, and sculptures by 20th Century German artists, in addition to photographs of sculptures by Tilman Riemenschneider (c. 1460-1531).

Italian sister city Caltanissetta will be represented by a

continuous slide show of objects from its museum and scenes of the city.

The "sister-city show" will run through Oct. 12.

Portraits of an Italian gentleman, a Parisian archbishop, and an American poet are among the additions to the Gallery's permanent collection.

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