

Intercommunion Gaining in Popularity

Strict Catholic doctrine and discipline forbidding intercommunion — Catholics receiving Communion at Protestant services or Protestants being given Communion at Catholic Mass — has long standing force and clarity.

But some Catholics and Protestants are disregarding the lines of discipline and theology both in small "underground" gatherings and in large urban churches where only a small part of the congregation is known to the celebrant. Disobedience is rationalized by the belief that intercommunion will promote Christian unity. The following roundup indicates recent actions and reactions in a growing controversy between strict doctrine and practice. — The Editor.

While theologians of many Churches still have reservations about intercommunion, the practice itself, with or without ecclesiastical approval, is rapidly becoming both more widespread and more public.

A new level in Catholic-Protestant intercommunion was reached at the recent meeting of Latin American bishops in Medellin, Colombia, when five Protestant delegate-observers took Communion at a Catholic Mass with the approval of the bishops.

This incident has touched off reactions at the Vatican.

A month before the Medellin incident, a number of Catholics took Communion during a Protestant service at the Fourth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala, Sweden. When the intercommunion was publicly reported, Church officials hastily pointed out that these Catholics were not

part of the official group of delegate-observers.

The Church's reaction to the intercommunion at Medellin was sharper, perhaps because the persons involved were official Protestant delegate-observers and prominent Catholic officials.

When news of the intercommunion became public knowledge on the international level, almost a month after it took place, the Vatican's reaction came from the Church's most prominent and respected specialist in ecclesiastical relations, Augustin Cardinal Bea, president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity.

Cardinal Bea's statement assumed that the intercommunion had been permitted because of a misunderstanding of his secretariat's May 1967 Directory on ecclesiastical relations. The Directory, partially implementing decisions of the Second Vatican Council, had authorized "limited" intercommunion in situations of "urgent personal need."

This authorization is restricted to members of the Orthodox Churches and does not include Anglicans and Protestants, Cardinal Bea said.

"It is not sufficient that a Christian be belonging to one of the confessions mentioned in

spiritually well-disposed and freely solicits Communion from a Catholic minister," he added.

"There are two other conditions to be fulfilled — that a person has toward the Eucharist the same faith professed by the Catholic Church and that he is not able to secure the ministrations of his own confession."

Father Gregory Diekmann, O.S.B., a liturgist at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minn., has criticized the Directory for granting less than the Council's Decree on Eucharism in the area of intercommunion. In an address to the Fifth National Workshop on Christian Unity last June, Father Diekmann noted that the Vatican Council sanctioned intercommunion, not only in cases of necessity but also "for the restoration of Christian unity."

He quoted the provision of the Decree on Eucharism that "the course of action to be adopted is to be decided by local episcopal authority, unless otherwise provided for by the national bishops' conference or by the Holy See."

This sentence was dropped in the Directory. Father Diekmann observed in connection with both intercommunion and liturgical experiment, he asked, "Can a decision of a

General Council be rendered void in this fashion?"

While it was asked before the Medellin intercommunion, Father Diekmann's question is given further point by this incident, where the officials of a Latin American bishops' conference did, in fact, permit intercommunion "for the restoration of Christian unity."

A strong grass-roots desire for the removal of restrictions on intercommunion was indicated in a survey of suggestions submitted to the Detroit Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission, Msgr. Albert A. Matyn, head of the commission, said that a number of persons had suggested intercommunion on special occasions such as weddings. Others, he added, believe that Catholics should be able to fill their Sunday Mass obligation by attending any Christian service.

United Methodist Bishop James K. Matthews, chairman of the Division of Christian Unity of the National Council of Churches, expressed a view widespread among Protestants when he said that Cardinal Bea's limitation of intercommunion is "understanding but disappointing."

He noted that some other Christian Churches also have reservations about intercommunion and that full sharing of the Eucharist "is still a vision which can only be

glimpsed from afar." In a sense, intercommunion is the iceberg of the ecumenical movement — an issue and an activity that lies almost entirely beneath the surface.

This remark applies not only to the physical act of intercommunion, which often takes place privately; it is equally true in the realm of ideas.

Below the issue of the sharing of Communion are many other concerns: the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist; the function of ecclesiastical authority and the movement toward decentralization in the Catholic Church; the meaning of the Eucharist as sacrifice, as meal, as a source of grace and as either a sign or a promoter of Christian unity.

The simple act of receiving the Eucharist inevitably has enormous ramifications since it is, for a large segment of Christianity, the central, basic act of worship. Churches which do not give primary emphasis to the Eucharist, generally those with less hierarchical structure, have no particular difficulty with intercommunion.

Discussions which include intercommunion among other topics are currently taking place among the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran Churches.

Among denominations in which Communion is given to all who seek it are the Methodists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ. Some Baptist groups do not practice open Communion, but the American and Southern Baptist Conventions leave the decision to the local congregations.

Orthodox Churches generally practice intercommunion only with other Orthodox Churches and many Lutheran denominations have only of late begun conversations on full-scale intercommunion among themselves.

The Anglican Communion has taken steps toward limited, mutual intercommunion with other Churches and already has special provisions for ecumenical occasions. In the U.S., the Episcopal Church has approved the giving of Communion to baptized Christians of other denominations at ecumenical gatherings and "in circumstances of individual spiritual need."

Although no reliable figures can be obtained, it is generally believed that intercommunion occurs most often in the "underground Church," where concealment is also a common practice and denominational differences are usually de-emphasized. The practice is becoming increasingly public, however, at ecumenical gatherings.

Deaths

Mrs. Schneider

Hornell — Father Orrin W. Feller, assistant pastor of St. Ignatius, offered a funeral Mass

last week in Baltimore for his sister, Mrs. Dorothy Feller Schneider, wife of Jacob A. Schneider.
Survivors include two daughters, Mrs. William Chesney and Mrs. Paul Pratt, Baltimore; a sister, Mrs. Margaret Zak, Rochester; and three brothers, DeWain Feller, Florida; Jack Feller, Baltimore; and Raymond Feller, Rochester.

CHURCH

Adjust Missions

By Father P. David F. Donohue touched off a good controversy at the San Francisco Convention of the National Catholic Educational Association. He called for a serious examination of public Catholic education and suggested that the first priority be education in the urban ghetto. Later in the convention he was supported in his priorities by Harold Howe, Commissioner of Education.
With the prospect of an increase in inter-city schools being held next year and increasing at the Pastoral Office of Subsidiaries paid to inter-city schools, Msgr. Donohue's suggestions may deserve a longer look.
It would help the dialog, if the protagonists could make a basic ground for discussion. One is seriously questioning the state of the Catholic education system.

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What's Happening In the Diocese

For the Holy Childhood School, which relies on tuition, gifts and such fundraisers as this spaghetti supper tomorrow night 5 until 9 at Cardinal Mooney High School, by the Parents Group.
A book review luncheon at the Rochester Club Oct. 29 will be the first fundraiser of the new Women's Auxiliary of St. Martin de Porres Center. Mildred C. Boylan will review Robert Massey's "Nicholas and Alexander" at noon, preceding lunch for reservations. Mrs. Andrew Steiny, 286-5077, or Mrs. Robert Brown, 544-7627.
A fashion show, luncheon and bazaar will be held at the Seton Branches at their annual sale Nov. 7 in the nurses' residence, St. Mary's Hospital. One sale from 9 to 4, a book of members' favorite recipes, handmade holidays accessories, baked goods, Italian imports, lunch at 11, 12:45 and 1:30. Mrs. Joseph Deane heads the sale committee. Mrs. Richard Schubart, the luncheon.**Bavarian atmosphere** will pervade McQuaid Saturday night in the hall dedicated as a German Biergarten and the Schuplatler Group of the Bavarian Club providing the music for the Parents' Club Oktober fest.
Rosary Guild opportunity sale of clothing, household equipment, books, toys and baby gear, with coffee and doughnuts. The sale — 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., Saturday at Holy Rosary school hall.**Senior citizen handicrafters** from six counties will sell their products Tuesday, from noon until 8 p.m., in the basement of the Rochester Gas and Electric Building, East Ave.
Manus Alexis, president of the Urban League and professor of business at the University of Rochester, will review "THE CONFESIONS OF NAT TURNER" by William Styron, in the lunch hour series at Rochester Public Library, 12:15 p.m. Tuesday.
At Memorial Art Gallery, a one-day exhibition and sale of original graphics Wednesday. The collection includes lithographs, etchings, woodcuts and silk screens by old masters and contemporaries.
At Our Mother of Sorrows, Christmas cards are on sale now that the church may be air-conditioned next summer.
Ladies Catholic Benevolent Association — Advisory Senate meeting 8:15 p.m. Monday, our Lady of Perpetual Help hall.
Cardinal Mooney Women's Guild, 8 p.m. Monday at school.
Ladies of the Alhambra, postponed until 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, at Koff C Clubrooms, Monroe Ave.
Bowling party at Clover lanes, 2750 Monroe, at 2:45 p.m. Sunday, sponsored by Catholic Alumni Club for single college graduates.
Two parish card parties tonight, St. Joseph's, Penfield, at 8:30 and Corpus Christi at 8 by the Rosary societies.
Chicken dinner tomorrow night, 5:30 to 9, at Most Precious Blood.
Seton Branch 83, Saturday lunch with Mrs. William G. Martins, 2022 Edgemoor, 1 p.m.
At St. Joseph's, car wash Saturday by eighth grade girls.
Catholic Adults Club chicken barbecue and square dance Sunday at 3, Mother of Sorrows school hall.

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By FATHER ROBERT A. Special Correspondent
Vatican City — (RNS) — Flurry of rumors and chaotic Vatican confirmations that the Dominican theologian at Father Edward Schillebeeckx now being examined by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Holy Office. It is no question of a "trial," speaking.
The Congregation, it is said, is simply carrying out its assigned of keeping abreast of contemporary theological thought.
"It is normal," said the spokesman, "that the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Holy Office should take the time to do a thing that is the greatest of invest research of international importance."
By that these interpretation denature the doctrine but plain it.
He denied that there is a temptation to create an atmosphere of persecution or to return to unfettered for our times.
The Schillebeeckx case is only in an exploratory at what comes later? If, in fact, things should be found to