

Liturgy of the Future... Wonderful Things to Come

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There were Father George Predmore, composer, author of a book on church music, and an active promoter of boy choirs; Father Leo Mooney and Father John M. Duffy, who introduced a complete music curriculum into the diocesan schools, and organized summer schools in Rochester, conducted by Mother Georgia Stevens, R.S.C.J., of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music; Professor Philip Kreckel, organist at St. Boniface Church, and prolific composer of sacred music for both choir and organ.

The diocesan teaching Sisters entered wholeheartedly into the program of liturgical development in the Rochester diocese. Among the Sisters of St. Joseph, no one perhaps deserves so great a tribute as Sister Florian Reichert, who spent herself tirelessly for many years as Music Supervisor for her Order.

The Sisters of Mercy were no less concerned and occupied with the promoting of sacred music in the schools. Eagerly they sought for training in the Church's music, and enlisted the help of teachers to train the young Sisters. Some of these trainees were Sister M. de Pazzi,

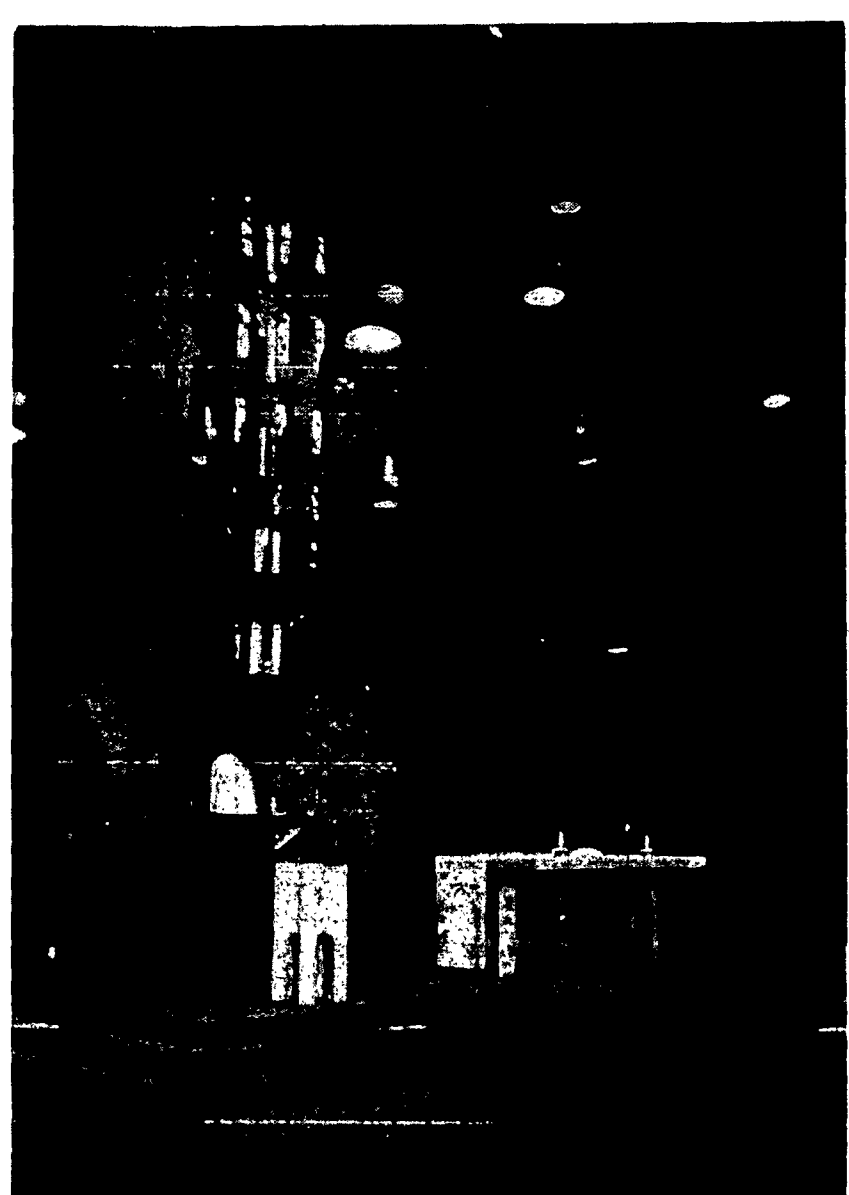
Sister M. Margaret, and Sister M. Helena; pioneers and pacesetters for a great music tradition among the Mercy Sisters.

The School Sisters of Notre Dame kept pace with these music developments in the schools where they taught. They were not trained in the diocese, but were appointed here from their motherhouse in Baltimore. But they brought with them a fine music tradition and trained their pupils in it.

The driving force behind all this energetic programming was the very sensible idea that, since today's children are tomorrow's adults, the liturgical hope of the future must be a good training of the young in the ideals and practice of sacred music. It was a good idea, and it cannot be faulted.

But now, reluctantly, we must enter a demerit.

After all the enthusiasm of the 1920's and 1930's bringing our children into the vibrant sweep of liturgical development, much of it was lost when they became adults in the 1940's and '50's. At the very time when the liturgical movement in the Church was gaining momentum, toward the great break-



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through in Vatican II, it was losing ground in the Rochester Diocese.

What went awry in Rochester? My answer is only the venturing of an opinion. But something needs to be ventured to arrive at the truth.

1. It seems to me that there was never any sufficient emphasis in the high school curriculum that would have confirmed the gains achieved in liturgical formation by the elementary schools. The result was a four year gap which proved to be fatal.

2. But even the gap might have been narrowed, if there had been a more active program of parish participation in the Mass. The use of the Missal was widely encouraged, indeed, but very little was done, except in isolated instances, to forward congregational singing or what was then called the Dialog Mass.

But now, in the '60's, all this is water over the dam. Vatican II awakened Rochester, as it awakened the whole Church, to the ongoing dynamics of the Christian faith.

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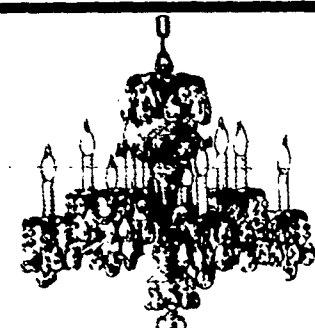
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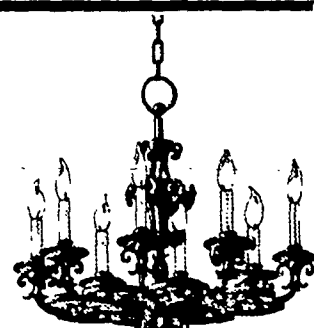
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