

CHURCH AND THE CITY

A Time to Give to Caesar

—By Father P. David Finks

This seems to be an age for thinking the unthinkable. The administration of the city of Rochester is talking seriously of taxing certain church properties. Lay and clergy groups from Los Angeles to Brooklyn are quietly but persistently asking that diocesan finances be open to public scrutiny like any other institution.

The National Catholic Reporter (Nov. 20, 1968) spoke of a secret discussion among the American Bishops at their recent Washington-Hilton meeting about threats to Church tax exemptions and heretofore undisclosed assets.

The actual fact is that the majority of large and medium American cities are in difficult financial straits and some like New York City (Time, Nov. 1, 1968) are on the verge of bankruptcy. Can churches and private educational institutions continue to expect total tax exemption when they are engaged in some profit-making endeavors within the boundaries of our beleaguered municipalities?

The answer to these and other connected questions about the Church's obligation to its community are extremely complicated. Involved are intricate matters of constitutional law. The other side of the coin of re-evaluating Church tax exemption is the perennially thorny question of state and federal subsidies for private and Church-sponsored educational efforts.

It could be suggested that along with the issue of taxing income-producing church property, the City Council should seriously consider levying a personal income tax on suburbanites who earn their living within the city limits. The city government also should receive a more realistic share of the country's sale tax.

Perhaps a "package" of new taxes could be put together which would be both politically feasible and broaden sufficiently the municipal tax base to meet the needs of the city population.

Congregations could be taxed for all new buildings except actual space used for worship. This would encourage the building of space-saving, multi-purpose ecclesiastical buildings. Furthermore, it seems that any new church costing more than \$500,000 should be taxed much

as other so-called luxuries in our lives are taxed at present.

The special needs of the poor could be attended to by offering exemptions to churches according to a graduated scale of real congregational income and endowments. Some ways must be found to encourage main-line churches to remain in "inner city" and transitional neighborhoods so that they may contribute to the social stability of these areas.

A more realistic and diversified municipal tax-base might also make it possible to stem the exodus from the older urban neighborhoods by offering some form of tax credits to residents who own their own homes and are willing to rehabilitate them as needed. This more healthy resident-ownership would decrease the opportunities for slumlord profits and the incursions of speculator-racketeers.

A side benefit might be that church leaders and congregations might take a more realistic interest in the problems of the total community if just institutional taxes made them aware of their common responsibility for the well-being of that community.

The New Testament presents Jesus and his followers developing a community of believers who contributed to the Roman ruled community in which they lived. Unlike the Pharisees who saw the tax as contributing to an idolatrous civil power, Jesus said: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

In fact it is only after the Church became the established religion of imperial Rome under Constantine that tax exemption became a reality, along with certain other imperial developments which have proved to be something less than beneficial.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

A Lesson on Human Respect

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

The night of elections I slept late at St. Francis de Sales rectory in Geneva. At 10:30 the next morning I asked Father Wedow: "Can you get me a good altar boy to serve my Mass? By 'good,' I mean competent rather than virtuous." Said he: "Will do," which is older jargon for the present "beautiful," which doesn't make much sense.

When I got to the sacristy a bright-eyed boy of 14, named John had things ready for the Eucharistic celebration. The theology of celebration without a mob or even a few, is expressed by Vatican Council II: "Priests fulfill their chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In it the work of our redemption continues to be carried out. For this reason priests are strongly urged to celebrate Mass every day, because even if the faithful are unable to be present it is an act of Christ and the Church." (Decree on Ministry and Life of Priests, No. 13)

The Gospel of the Mass was Matthew XXII, which narrates how Pharisees would entrap Jesus. "Master, You are unconcerned about anybody's opinion, since you don't act out of human respect..."

Since John and I were the only people of God present, it seemed fitting to have a dialogue homily. "John, what do you think the Pharisees meant when they said to Our Lord: 'You don't act out of human respect'?" He replied: "I think they were telling Him that He didn't have any respect for them."

There was a certain logic in the answer. However, we developed a bit. "You see, most people are worried about what other people think of them. This is what is called 'human respect.' For example, if you and three other boys were out with two punks; and one punk said: 'Let's go and break the windows in the empty house on DiSanto's lot', how

do you think you would react?"

"I'd say no."

"And suppose one of the punks was popular and a leader, and he jeered at the four of you, and sneered: 'Chicken! Then What?' 'I hope I'd still say No.'"

"Good. And I hope so too. But many people do things they really don't want to do exactly because they are afraid of other people's opinion for them. So out of respect for other people's opinion of them, they sell out their own convictions. John, no matter what the whole world does or thinks, be faithful to your convictions. Our Lord taught this by His life as well as by His words."

A week later I mailed the boy a book, the "Children's Bible," published by the Golden Press. It was a thank you to him, partly for his help at Mass, and partly for the inspiration he was. A few days later this letter came back. It will warm your hearts.

"Dear Father,

"I received your Bible and I am really grateful since the one we have dates back to the 1700s. It has been passed from generation to generation. We have nine children, so hardly the money to buy another.

"But what I really want to thank you for is your lesson on human respect. You wouldn't believe how much this helps me. Everytime I do something I refer to your lesson to help me. It really helps when you are in a bad mood and do something right.

"I would have written earlier but I have been shoveling sidewalks this week. We got a lot of snow. Father O'Keefe managed to get some of my friends and myself a job to wait on tables and sing. It was really wild. Thanks for the Bible and your lesson on human respect."

Of such as this youth is the Kingdom of Heaven, and the future of the Church. Thanks be to God!



New Canons Provide 'Fresh Expression'

By FR. THOMAS LENHARD, S.T.L.
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The Mass continues to change! The Episcopal Conference of American Bishops has recently announced the completion of three new Canons for incorporation into the Roman liturgy. Bishop Sheen has announced the new Canons will be used beginning Jan. 1 here.

These Canons, or anaphoras — their ancient name which the Bishops chose to restore — will offer a celebrant at Mass a broader variety for emphasizing different elements of God's saving work among his people.

Hopefully, now, each Eucharistic celebration will be better suited to the theological development, understanding and background of the worshippers.

Using these anaphoras, predicted the Bishops will also give a "fresh expression" to our "theology of the Eucharist, of the People of God and of the Church... as well as to the theology of the Holy Spirit in the Church and, specifically, of the Spirit's role in the Eucharist."

Furthermore, the ecumenical horizons of the Second Vatican Council and those of the recently appearing

theology of the secular will find their way into this once unchanging portion of the Roman Mass.

The Bishops assessed the present limitation to one Canon in the Roman liturgy as a serious handicap to a fuller appreciation of the "wonders of God." Moreover, the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church have enjoyed for many centuries the use of several anaphoras and, now, with these new additions to the Latin rite, the worshipping communities of the Western Church will be similarly enriched.

In speaking of the characteristics of these new anaphoras, the Episcopal Conference used as its basis of comparison the literary style of the old Roman Canon — "distinguished by solemnity, redundancy and brevity all simultaneously." This Roman Canon (Anaphora I), nevertheless, did encapsulate the Eucharistic Mystery in a way which could not be easily bettered. 1600 years have borne this out!

Anaphora II will thus reflect the best of this early counterpart with its simplicity and conciseness; its form in fact, is based on a 3rd century Canon devised by a Roman priest, St. Hippolytus. These characteristics will lend themselves well to the less complicated celebrations of

ferial days, Masses for children, youths or small groups.

Its verbal directness will also make it an excellent starting point for open discussions on the various elements necessary for true Eucharistic prayer. Although Anaphora II does have its own proper preface, provision can be made for its substitution with one of the older prefaces still in use or with one of the nine new soon to appear.

Anaphora III can be especially useful as an alternate with the Roman Canon now used on Sundays. It is moderately long but exhibits a unity of expression revealing the elements of the Last Supper in a clean and unembellished manner. This style and structure were deliberately attuned for use with any of the old or new Roman prefaces.

Anaphora IV is a self-contained entity and will be used without any

substitution or deletion. Clearly the most erudite of the new anaphoras, it presumes the congregation's familiarity with Sacred Scripture from which it draws to portray the History of Salvation.

Its specific characteristic is a panoramic summary of God's involvement with creation and the text moves through these stages with a notably pleasing facility. The priest-celebrant is urged to instruct his congregation so that this form will ultimately be a natural and spontaneous expression of their prayerful sentiments.

It is the hope of the Bishops that the clergy's familiarity with these new forms of prayer will contribute to the faithful's knowledgeable acceptance. In this way, the worship of the Church and of each Christian will become more the internal reality which has been the goal of liturgical reform.

The Liturgy and Communication

By PINCHER LEAVEN

There is little doubt in my mind that Marshall McLuhan has done more to promote liturgical awareness in this country than anybody else.

He invented The Phrase "The medium is the message," and even those who wouldn't dare read his books throw off that Phrase with great aplomb and finesse at parties. But what has that to do with liturgy? Just this:

Both liturgy and The Phrase indicate there's more than meets the eye in the ordinary business of living. We are constantly being pummeled by an extraordinary amount of information that sinks in so fast we are not even aware of it.

It makes no difference whether a piece of information gets in unconsciously or consciously. The point is, it gets in and influences us nonetheless. We can consciously know, for example, we are watching a great film, and still be emotionally responsive to it because we unconsciously know that the theater is dirty, the audience does not like the film, the smell of popcorn is faintly distressing, etc.

As an example of how this works in liturgical practice, I turn to the more vocal complaints of Roman Catholics about worship. The most frequently heard is the one that the liturgy doesn't relate to daily life. In their efforts to make it relate, liturgists and pastors spent years making their sermons apropos. The

same complaint came in. Liturgists and pastors hung banners and turned altars around. The same complaint came in. Language was changed, and the results were the same. Hands were thrown up in dismay.

The point missed was that the subtle bits of information were just the same as ever. The "sense" of peoplehood, community, was missing.

While I would never advocate not changing the liturgy, it is true that, year back, had we concentrated on forming smaller, more closely knit parishes based on family, or professional, or interest ties, there would not be this revolution in the accident of liturgy today.

But we cannot mourn the undone past. Instead we refer again to McLuhan and project the future.

There is awareness, that is, to recognize those subtle bits of information when they lodge.

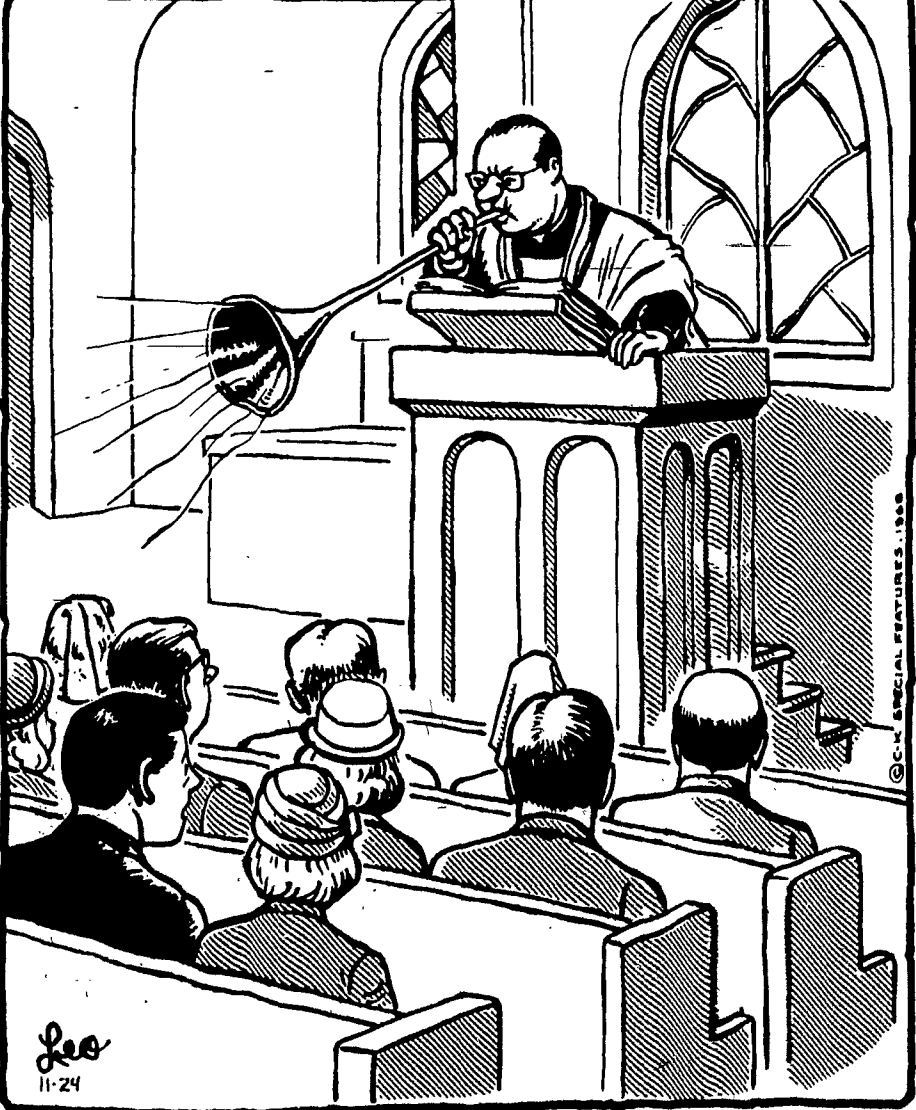
Many Christians today seem to have a rather acute sense of the present going on about them. And because of this they find they are in reality celebrating life to a higher degree in their daily lives than they do within the present structures of worship. Some other Christians have been jolted by the prophecy of Christ to the woman at the well about worshipping in the heart instead of on the mountain.

When we project what we think the worship of these people may well be like in the future, things seem a bit uglier, in one sense; and in another sense quite beautiful.

Romano Guardini, the late theologian, once expressed the thought that liturgy is God's children playing before Him and delighting Him.

It is my impression that the liturgy is heading toward a fuller realization of that thought. The implications of it being heightened kinship, extraordinary freedom, and greater cognizance of the saving presence of Christ.

CHURCH HUMOR



"People pay attention when he preaches on the last judgment!"

Pope Names Bishop To Canadian See

ANS, Que. — (RNS)—The Apostolic Administrator of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Amos, Bishop Gaston Hains has been appointed bishop by Pope Paul VI.

The Pope has accepted the retirement application of Bishop Joseph Alde Desmarais, bishop here since 1939.

the difference is like

DAY & NIGHT



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