

New Eucharistic Prayers Explained by Liturgical Panel

On New Year's Day churches of the diocese began to use new Eucharistic Prayers for that section of the Mass called the Canon. Three alternatives to the venerable Roman Eucharistic Prayer were released by the Vatican on May 23, 1968.

Because of their diversity, comparative brevity, newness of phrasing and richness of expression, they should move priests and people a step further toward understanding and effective celebration of the Eucharist.

The following notes (the first of a series) were prepared by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission for the laity's broader appreciation of the Prayers as they are introduced in parish worship. — The Editor.

NEW EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

I. Reasons for New Eucharistic Prayers:

1. The use of the vernacular in the

Roman Canon has pointed up the difficulty for the priest of proclaiming with meaning and freshness a Canon that is the same day after day. Even the recitation of something sacred can become monotonous.

2. The Eucharist is a great mystery. Its meaningfulness cannot be exhausted in any one Eucharistic Prayer, however beautiful. Hence a plurality of Eucharistic Prayers is desirable: each one gives a new insight, a new perspective into the mystery.

3. The Roman Canon — venerable and traditional though it is — has certain limitations:

(a) It lacks unity: it gives the impression of a series of prayers put together rather than a single prayer.

(b) It has no explicit invocation of the Holy Spirit (epiclesis) — common in other liturgical anaphoras.

(c) The various intercessory prayers are arranged in an unsatisfactory way: some before the

words of institution, some after.

(d) The list of saints is too long and not sufficiently universal.

(e) There is an exaggerated and repetitious emphasis on the offering of the gifts which tends to obscure the fact that what we offer in the Mass is Christ our Lord and ourselves with Him.

II. General Notions on the New Eucharistic Prayers

1. Designation of the New Prayers: They are not called new "canons." The word "canon" means a fixed rule to be followed. Since the Eucharistic Prayer is now no longer fixed in only one form, such a designation is inaccurate. The word "canon" may be retained for Roman Canon, which is also called Eucharistic Prayer 1.

2. They are sometimes called "anaphoras" (Gk. laying on, i.e., the laying of the gifts on the altar).

3. The best term for these prayers is "Eucharistic Prayer." They are

prayers of grateful praise to God for what He has done and continues to do for us in Christ.

III. Basic Structure of the New Eucharistic Prayers:

1. Preface (not so much an introduction, but a proclamation — praefatio). A hymn of grateful praise offered to God for what He has done.

2. Sanctus — the first acclamation of the people.

3. The Consecratory Invocation — asking God to bless and consecrate the gift.

This work of "sanctifying" the gifts and those who share in them is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the epiclesis is an explicit request to the Father to send His Spirit upon the gifts.

4. The Institution Narrative — which at the direction of Pope Paul will be the same in the three new Eucharistic Prayers. The words are commonly referred to as the words of consecration. However we should not ignore the consecratory nature of the eucharistic prayer as a whole.

5. The Memorial acclamation — the second acclamation of the people. Acclamations are extremely useful in helping the people re-focus their attention. They also enable the whole assembly to participate more actively in the prayer. The acclamation is a conscious statement of the assembly's Faith.

Introduction by the priest: "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith."

Acclamation of the people: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again."

6. The Memorial Prayer (anamnesis) and the offering — we have the command, "Do this in memory of me" and the offering (of Christ and of ourselves).

In obedience to the command of Christ, the Church presents to the Father the memorial of Christ's saving work: it is the objective representation of his sacrifice of himself for man, his death, his resurrection, the whole paschal mystery of Christ's passing over from death to life.

7. The Communion invocation — Offering this sacrifice, the Church desires to share in its fruits and the

fruit of Christ's sacrifice is his Spirit. It is natural then that at this juncture there should come the prayer for a fruitful communion, namely the second part of the epiclesis (invocation).

Normally this epiclesis takes the form of a prayer that the Holy Spirit might transform those who communicate in the offering and so they may enter more fully into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection which are being celebrated. It is through this integration into the mystery of Christ that our reconciliation with the Father is expressed and achieved, and this is why we often find an accent on unity in the epiclesis.

8. The Intercessions — for the Church, for the dead (No specific prayer to remember the living and the dead is indicated, but this may be done).

9. The Commemoration of the saints — shorter and more general.

10. The Concluding Doxology — same for all four Eucharistic Prayers. The "Amen" after the doxology is the third acclamation of the people.

COMMENTARY

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NOW HEAR THIS...

New Drama in the Liturgy

By Father Richard Tormey

An inquiring reporter outside any parish church in the diocese after Sunday Mass would readily discover that reactions to the local liturgy are neither happy nor unanimous.

There are individuals in every parish who dolefully criticize every step of renewal attempted by their pastors in line with the Vatican Council decisions. The traditionalists are still unper-suaded.

There are also individuals who dis-gustedly deplore their pastors' reluctance to move faster in bringing more lay activity, modern musical forms and meaningful feeling to parish worship. They have heard of other parishes "more progressive" than theirs.

The large middle group of parish-ioners would probably speak of im-provement in their understanding of the Holy Sacrifice since the Canon of the Mass was put into English and the altar was turned around.

They might also be glad that they sing a bit and recite basic parts like the Gloria and Creed together, that lay-men read the Epistle and youth gets an occasional chance for folk-song. They passively accept what the priests dictate while admitting that the liturgy renovations seem contrived, the texts monotonous and the whole wor-

ship experience less inspiring than they had been led to hope by the reformers.

Rome is not deaf to the laity's di-vided feelings even though it seems slow in permitting the steps many de-sire to bring an actual and theological animation to the sacred liturgy. But it has pledged itself to "no innovations unless the good of the Church genuin-ely and certainly require them" and in-vestigation that is "theological, histori-cal and pastoral" justifies them. (Con-sist. on Lit. art. 23).

This week into this condition of il-liturgical passivity and restlessness comes a startling event: three new Eu-charistic Prayers and eight new Pref-aces make a debut in the parish liturgy. (See official commentary, printed above.) The Roman Canon, composed before 600 A.D. and since about 1100 the only prayer form used unchanged day after day in the entire Western Church for the center part of the Mass, will be supplemented (but not elimi-nated).

The official reasons given for this notable advance are intriguing: the new Eucharistic Prayers ("canon" is out) are offered because of "monotony of repetition," "antidote for experi-mentation," "the inexhaustible mystery of the Eucharist" and "defects in the Roman Canon."

The arrival and the form of the new prayers carry out a basic principle of the post-Council liturgy: texts and rites should instruct, refresh the people's faith and should encourage active participation with mind and voice. The new prayers, says one expert, "are designed to shine forth in a true mood of simplicity and clarity and in terms of liturgical drama and spiritual excite-ment."

It may be some weeks before the parish missals contain the new Eucharistic Prayers or pastors have them mimeo-graphed for all. But there should be no delay in the duty of the parish priests to provide explanation of these new variations of the Roman Canon.

All who desire earnestly to take a renewed intellectual part in the parish community's worship will need to be shown how the new prayers teach the theology of the Eucharist, furnish beautiful new themes of thanksgiving and praise, and provide concepts of memorial and petition we have so long disregarded in the old Canon.

In themselves the new canons may seem as change just for the sake of change. But they are a historic forward step for individual Christian under-standing as well as for community identity with the loving Saviour whom we offer to God at each Mass.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Remarks on the 'Submerging Laymen'

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Christmas stirrings that have long been silent. A delightful note came from a friend of 20 years ago. She is intelligent, has a Masters degree in business and a determined will. She wrote:

"I am recovering from an operation and am home, but as usual, am late with my Christmas cards. I saw a letter you have written in AMERICA some months ago and disagreed most vehemently with you, but didn't have time to write. Some day I hope to look it up again and tell you why."

"Life keeps having its ups and downs. One of my ups was the CCD conference at Bridgeport in August. Fantastic! I am now principal of one of our four schools of religion in the parish with 29 teachers and about 750 pupils."

Janine has always challenged my soul to debate. So I wrote with a big smile, which I hope she will recognize in the letter.

Dear Janine,

"Do I sense in your letter that subtle hostility of the Submerging Laymen with which I am somewhat familiar? A Submerging Layman I define as: an emerged layman who would sink everyone who holds an

opinion contrary to his own, whether he is another layman, or a priest or a bishop."

"Thanks to Xerox I can send you a copy of my letter to America. It was an objection to a snide letter mocking the Scriptural Rosary Book-let advertisement. The letter was also printed in our own Courier-Journal."

The points embraced were: 1) an irritation at the letter scoffing at the Scriptural Rosary, 2) a scepticism that charity motivated that letter; 3) the example of a thirtyish professional woman who wrote: "The rosary has been a special devotion of mine for years. But the Scriptural passages bring a light so beautiful that it is almost a brand new discovery."

"Now, I know your competence and your faith. That you should be the principal of a CCD school indicates that you are using your talents. I consider CCD one of the first needs of the contemporary Church."

However, your avowed vehemence, presumably about the rosary, makes me wonder.

"If your CCD program is true renewal I am glad. If it entertains

that negative destruction of treas-ured practices and loyalties, I am not glad."

Whatever the enthusiasm of Submerging Laymen, the Church still blesses the rosary and other devo-tions to Our Lady. The Church en-courages visits to the Blessed Sacrament and private prayer. The Church teaches that the Sacrificial Banquet is truly a sacrifice.

"A few months ago I read 'The Spirit of Renewal' published by the NCCM. It is utterly and sub-mergingly slanted. The whole book is shot through with querulousness. It so completely submerges the Church's teaching that the Mass is a sacrifice as well as a banquet, that to me it reads like a denial of re-fined Catholic teaching. This book is part of CCD literature!"

"I am sending you two books as a gift. One is the 'Scriptural Ro-sary.' If the rosary has lost its de-votion for yourself, at least you as a teacher will be able to help those who do love it."

"The second is new: 'Is It the Same Church?' by Frank Sheed. Please read the last chapter first. It is entitled 'Sunrise or Sunset,' and I think you will have sympathy for the book!"

CHURCH AND THE CITY

Moon Voyage and Youths' Revolt

By Father P. David Finks

On Friday, Dec. 27, 1968, the names of Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan were dropped down three spaces in Who's Who Among World Explorers to accommodate the moon voyagers, Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders.

Whatever reservations we may have about space exploration priori-ties over terrestrial human needs, the thrill of being in these brave men and the triumph of our technology is a sign of hope in the human spirit.

As a new year begins, I think that we should evaluate the youthful revolution in our society with the same enthusiasm and pride as the fantastic voyage of Apollo 8.

Everyone is aware that there is a sizeable minority of young people caught up in a serious revolutionary ferment. Organized and unorganized, they are visible and audible and frightening to established society from Japan to Mexico, from Prague to San Francisco.

Experts in the social sciences say that this phenomenon cannot be dis-missed as the age-old temporary re-belliousness of youth. There is a seri-ousness and determination about basic human values that is far deeper than traditional growing pains and identity problems.

The young American radicals have for the most part been brought up in middle-class, post-war affluence.

Their whole lives have been lived under the shadow of thermonuclear destruction.

The Church, leaders and faithful laity, is massively ignored by the elite of our young people. Our ec-clesiastical concern with quantity in church attendance and numbers of religious vocations, both decreasing, still hides from us the more serious loss of the brightest and the best of the young generation.

They charge us with hypocrisy and condemn us by their indifference. They have no quarrel with Judeo-Christian values. They are committed to these values of human love and freedom, the dignity of the person, individual rights and trust in one's fellowman. They hear church-men talk about these values, but cannot see the church acting on its concern. John D. Rockefeller III in a recent article in Saturday Review quotes a young man as saying, "There is a genuine religious revival going on, but the church is missing out on it."

The young radical sees the church as the chaplain of the establishment paralyzed with institutional anxieties. He is unwilling to hear exhortations to prayer and worship when worship-pers and clergy are unwilling to put their lives and reputations on the line to change a society which ignores the poor, the Blacks, the migrants, far away little people torn by war and commercial colonialism.

We in the church must show that we are as committed to the service of our fellowman as are our young critics. Only then will there be the possibility of coalitions of mature ex-perience with youthful dynamism, political expertise with moral righteousness, institutional power as a necessary platform for social change.

Most of our clergy want to help their people to greater involvement in human service. We have found by experience that even a small band of loyal and sophisticated activists can revolutionize the life style of a parish in a few short years. Our greatest enemy is complacency and fear of launching out into the un-verse.

PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Pope Paul has named Bishop Joseph Hoeffner of Muenster as coadjutor, with the right of succession, to the Archdiocese of Cologne. He will succeed Joseph Cardinal Frings upon his retirement. Cardinal Frings has already twice requested Vatican permission for retirement.

Bishop Laurence Bianchi has resigned as Catholic ordinary of Hong Kong because of health reasons. He had withdrawn his resig-nation last year to be with his diocese when Communist-inspired disturbances broke out.

Father Edward S. Sartz, S.J., has been awarded the American Catholic Asso-ciation's top prize for scholarship for his book "The Works and Days of John Fisher."

The use of Jewish religious symbols on New York State lottery tickets has been con-demned by the American Jewish Congress as "offensive."

Archbishop James P. Davis of Santa Fe, N.M., has endorsed a proposal for a state income tax surcharge to aid the Al-buquerque public school system.

Leonard H. Skoglund Jr., vice president of a machine tool accessories business, has been elected head of the 43,000-member Notre Dame Alumni Association.



Cardinal Frings



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