

Does Moon's Ugliness Reflect The Anti-Creativity of Satan?

(Third in a Series)

By BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN
Is the Cosmos Frustrated

When God made the universe He wrote his autograph on everything He created. Mountains spoke of His Power, the sunset of His Beauty, the flowers of His Wisdom. Before man, who was master of creation, abused his freedom, poetry must have been the language of creation, for everything material bespoke the spiritual. The sin of man introduced prose, or matter-of-factness and dullness.

We may even say that God made the universe with a Divine Sense of Humor. Humor is the ability to "see through things", to glimpse the Creator through creation, the Invisible through the visible, the Artist through the work of His brush and chisel. When man sinned, the universe was no longer transparent like a windowpane; it became opaque like a curtain. Men no longer saw God "through things"; they saw only things. Seriousness took over. Gold was just gold; sex was just sex; stars were just stars.

But whatever our vision, Nature belongs more to God than to us. It is on His side, not ours. If

The mystery is heightened as we read the story of Creation in the first verse of Genesis, the passage the astronauts read as they looked on the moon: "In the beginning God created the heavens (plural) and the earth". Now comes the shock! In verse II: "Now over the earth was a formless void. There was darkness over the deep, and God's Spirit hovered over the water". This is almost like saying: "Mother made an Angel Cake. It fell and became a mess, or even a Devil's Food."

Anti-Creation

Talk about a generation gap! Here is a creation gap! We just cannot imagine God making something and then immediately seeing it so disordered, that it took the Spirit, hovering over it like a bird, to begin its reordering. The first verse read from the pulpit of a space ship affirmed that Someone had to be the Ultimate of everything in Space, and faith added to this the confession that God created the universe. But while they were saying it, the astronauts looked down on a burnt out hearth and an ashen corpse, a clinker in the furnace of space that was almost repulsive after voyaging over 200,000 miles to get a glimpse of it. While some fingertip had to make this lunar



"The astronauts looked down on a burnt-out moon, an ashen corpse, a clinker in the furnace of space that was almost repulsive after voyaging over 200,000 miles to get a glimpse of it."

we abuse Nature, it abuses us. With "traitorous truthness and loyal deceit", it is fickle to us and true to Him. Everything that is, whether on this earth or in space, bears the memory of the Divine Command: "Let there be".

God Opens The Door To Nature

In a previous article we said that as time progresses God gradually removes two veils: one the mystery of His Love for man, especially in His enfleshment and His continuing Life and Truth in the Church; the other veil He removed was from Nature, allowing our age to see how He put things together. To no other age was it given to pull apart toys to see what makes the wheels go round.

To the Jews, and no other nation, did He whisper His plan for saving man, so only to our Western Civilization did He unlock the wisdom to split the "unspinnable atom" at the lower end of the spectrum and to scan the stars at the other, making the planets legible.

Grateful to God we must be for His two Revelations: one in the area of faith, the other in the area of science. Really, it is not Nature that opens the door to God; it is God Who opens the door to Nature. That is why we are scientific today. It is not because we are smarter than Aristotle or Heraclitus; it is only that God opened new doors, pulled up curtains and unlocked certain treasures which to other ages were still sealed. America was always here; Columbus did not make it. The atom was always the source of power. Paraphrasing what is said of the revelation of faith we may say: "When in former times God spoke to our forefathers, He spoke in fragmentary and varied fashion" through alchemists and astrologers. "But in this final age, He has spoken to us" through the physicists, the astronomers and the bio-chemists.

Complexes in Space

There is order enough in the cosmos to discover the Mind behind it. "His invisible attributes, that is to say His everlasting Power and Deity, have been visible ever since the world began, to the eye of reason in the things He has made". (Rom. 1/26)

But is there not some disorder in the universe? Was it once poetry and now it is prose? Does outer space seem to have undergone some kind of convulsion or inner disturbance like that which happened to the heart of man? We know that on earth all is not perfect harmony.

Huxley once cautioned Darwin about his belief that nature never makes a jump. Ovid, the pre-Christian poet, on the contrary, believed that catastrophes made great changes in the cosmos. In his work, fittingly called "Metamorphoses", he wrote, "When, the earth, covered with mud from a flood, became heated by the hot and genial rays of the sun, she brought forth innumerable forms of life, some ancient, some new and strange". Darwin saw catastrophe as the chief adversary of his theory of new species. Scientists today generally agree that there have been catastrophes in the evolution of planets as well as life.

Immanuel Velikovsky, in his "Earth in Upheaval", puts it in picturesque language: "The past of mankind must now be viewed in the light of the experience of Hiroshima and no longer from the portholes of the Beagle" (The name of the ship in which Charles Darwin, as a young naturalist, made his voyage around the globe). The universe, as well as man on this tiny earth, are not as they ought to be. Something has happened to both. There are disorders in the universe just as there are complexes in the heart of man. Planets bombard one another as man does violence to his brother.

surface, why was it like a desert in space, a lunar Sahara? Why was the universe a "formless void" or what the Hebrew calls a "waste and void"?

Putting the two verses together, the first verse seems creative, but the second seems anti-creative. It is almost like turning from Shakespeare to Gertrude Stein. As there seems to be anti-gravity in space, is there not also something "anti" in creation? As our modern world is full of negation and protest, does not the cosmos itself seem to have something of that "let-us-be-against-it" spirit? No adequate explanation is it to say that there was not yet life and order, but only a state of nebula or chaotic gases.

The text almost seems to suggest that someone spoiled God's work. Is not this exactly what we find in the creation of man? God made him, then man introduced ego supremacy into his nature by an abuse of freedom. God then had to remake him in the Incarnation and the Spirit hovered over Mary, as it hovered over the void of creation.

If humanity had a fall which made every heart chaotic, did creation also have a fall? It does seem that what was first fair became marred and blasted; a light was quenched and darkness reigned. The mystery of the chaos in creation is heightened by the fact that, as Isaiah said, "God did not make the earth a formless void (or "waste and void"). (45/17) If God did not, who did? The same word TOHU that is used in Genesis 1/2 is used by Isaiah.

Did someone throw a monkey wrench into the machinery of creation so that earthquakes on earth are matched by celestial pyrotechnics, as if a fireworks factory had blown up? Who struck the sour note which upset the whole orchestra so that the director had to ask for a re-play? One day the universe will be without disharmony, (Apoc. 21/4) implying that it is not so now. The existence of sorrow and evil, counter-workings of spaces and useless deserts like the moon, suggest the existence of a real, dynamic power of evil, some "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2/2).

Because this anti-God force exists through the universe, the ultimate happiness of man requires a new cosmos: "The heavens will disappear in a fire and the elements disintegrate in fearful heat, but our hopes are set, not on these, but on the new heavens and the new earth which He has promised us, and in which nothing but good will live." (2 Peter 3/10; Apoc. 20/11; Matt. 5/10)

The Spoiler

But how was disorder introduced into order? How was the vase made by the Divine Potter cracked? Why did God set a guard at the gates of the Garden of Eden? Did man become cracked?

We know what caused this present frustration in man: evil, which is not from God, appeared and gives an impulse to temptation. Before man turned liberty into license and issued his "Declaration of Independence" from God, under the impulse of evil, did not evil pre-exist him? Could there have been in the universe a war between good and evil previous to mankind's conflict? "Then a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels waged war upon the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought, but they had not the strength to win, and no foothold was left for them in heaven. So the great dragon was thrown down, that serpent of old that led the whole world astray, whose name is Satan or the Devil—thrown down to the earth and his angels with him". (Apoc. 12/7-9)

Can an Angel of Light, the "Son of the Morning" (Is. 14/12) fall without disturbing the uni-

(Continued on Page 8)

Our Readers Write ...

They're Stirred Up over Liturgy

Columns on the Commentary Page and Letters to the Editor in recent issues have stimulated reader reaction to imperfections in parish liturgy. We print several of these opinions and will welcome others to express their hopes for improvement of parochial worship.

No Monopoly

Your recent articles on liturgical change remind me that every Sunday there is a dowdy-appearing, middle-aged, stout woman — looking exactly like me — who quietly marvels at the liturgical things which have come to pass in her day.

She had been weaned, teething and nurtured on a shades-of-Jansenism spirituality where sin, its kind, degree and number, were of paramount concern.

Then one day, after 16 years of Catholic education, she visited a little book shop off Harvard Square in Cambridge, Mass., to hear a Benedictine monk speak on the liturgical life of the Church.

He spoke of Christ as the Sun, raised daily as the Center of the universal prayer of praise, with Mary like the Moon, unique and apart, her beauty that of the Sun's reflected light.

And how there was a seasonal cycle, like planets rotating around the Sun, from Advent through Pentecost, wherein with Christ we are yearly born, put to death and raised to share in His glory and in the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church — and how there also is a temporal cycle, wherein we look up to the heavens to contemplate the myriads of saints who have loved before us with a surpassing love.

This daily prayer of praise — like Mary and the Church Herself of which, in medieval times, she was familiarly known as the symbol — is clothed in infinite variety, the highest form of culture, spiritual or otherwise, in which anyone possibly can share.

And suddenly I was taken from my little corner of self-concern and was lifted to the top of the mountain, where I could see the whole vision of the Church on earth, and I became a joyous part of the universal Church's praise of God — not caring so intensely if my instrument were in perfect pitch, but only that I was a living part of it.

From that day on I gave many Boston pastors a hard time, begging them to stop playing monopoly with the greatest treasure of the Church, her Liturgy. I got busy setting up study clubs and lecturing where anyone would listen on "The Liturgy Is for the Laidy and the Mass for the Masses."

So now I realize that the day has dawned. The People of God are an indispensable part of the Liturgy, which, nominally means public or corporate worship.

— M. R. E.
Blessed Sacrament Parish

Instruction Needed

Your recent COMMENTARY—Now Hear This... (Courier-Journal 3 Jan. '69) struck a sympathetic chord in this liturgical spirit. To your already well-put observations I would like to add some further thoughts.

When we speak of liturgical reform and renewal, we can only speak adequately after we have evaluated the institution where this renewal is to take place — the PARISH. In other words, once we have established what we envision our parishes should be, then liturgical goals become meaningful.

In the average Catholic parish of our diocese at least attempting to be a community, a fellowship of believers, a true Passion the harkened phrase of (St.) Family of God? Is the parish all of these things — or even

one of them — or does it not more often resemble a corporation, its institution caught up merely in its own self-perpetuation?

This being the case, to talk about liturgical renewal, which aims at building a community, leaves the would-be interested Catholic faintly smiling to himself.

A recent conversation with a well-spoken high school student can best summarize my next point. It was her insight that "... [we] never have the Liturgy explained to us. The priests think we know what's going on."

Her point is evident and we might put it another way: "Can we put old wine in new wine skins?"

Many of our congregants have been trained in the tradition of private prayer at Mass. Considerable time spent inspiring and energy spent instructing must be exerted to change these attitudes and, thereby, form a praying community envisioned by Vatican II. Until such efforts are made, three new Eucharistic Prayers and eight new Prefaces will only deepen the liturgical malaise.

And, finally, though the Council was adamant in establishing the importance of the role played by the laity in celebrating the Eucharist, the priest should not, thereby, underestimate his role. How accurately did the Bishops in Council refer to the priest as the "president of the Assembly" — an obligating title, to say the least!

This priest-celebrant should "preside", then, as a man who knows it is a community he is forming, that this congregation needs his leadership in prayer now if such a venture be successful. This, along with the preached Word, is the type of instruction that is asked from our clergy.

It is asked not only if the liturgical renewal is to be successful but, even on a greater scale, if our parishes are to succeed.

— (Rev.) Thomas Lenhard
St. Bernard's Seminary
Professor of Liturgy

Up to Individual

The directives of Vatican Council II relative to the Liturgical Service propose that all who celebrate with the priest will participate with intention and intensity.

We are not asked to come to the Banquet to watch what takes place, but rather to be a part of what takes place.

Fortunately or unfortunately, celebrating the Eucharistic Feast is not at all like trying to warm up after having been out in the cold — getting the benefit of the warmth of the fire without making any conscious effort toward receiving this warmth other than to be sure to be in the room. Why, a person may even fall asleep before the fireplace, and awaken, sometime later, all warm and cozy.

The Catholic today must feel himself drawn to the sacred mysteries not by the sense of obligation of the "old morality", but rather by the magnetic force of wanting to share in the life of the Mystical Body in the unique communal experience.

The Mass should not only be the outward expression of an individual's relationship and dependence on God, but it should also be the sign of man's relationship to man, "person to person", in God.

Some argue for a more progressive Church; others hold back for the traditional aspects of religion. One says that the music should be modern; another wants the Prayer of the Faithful to be spontaneous; a third asks that there be processions.

These externals certainly help to make the Celebration more meaningful, but the intention of the individual is basic. His involvement in the Sacrifice is essential.

Word for Sunday

The 'Why' of Obedience

By Father Albert Shamon

One of the most enigmatical expressions in the Gospels is, "Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me?" A translation that removes much of the enigma is, "Lady, let me handle this in my own way." How did Christ handle the problem of a wine shortage at Cana of Galilee?

He supplied the lack. But He did it so quietly and unobtrusively that even the head-waiter did not know what had happened. Christ wants us to do good without fanfare or trumpet-blowing, not to let the left hand know what the right hand does. Yet even so, somebody, like the servants, is bound to learn of it and to benefit.

Secondly, Christ supplied the wine by a command. Christ generally gave a command before bestowing a blessing.

To the blind man, He said, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam." To the ten lepers, "Go and show yourselves to the priest." To the man with a withered hand, "Stretch out your hand." To the servants, "Fill the jars with water." By an all, Christ still gives commands: "Love one another," "Repent," "Go to the sacraments," "Pray," "Trust," "Be kind!" Why? So He can bless us.

If we do not receive the blessings of Christ, let us ask ourselves: Are we going what He commands? His commands are not to be questioned, but obeyed. The servants, like some modern captious critics, could have objected, "What's water got to do

with wine? It's wine we want, not water."

Often we do not see the relevance of religion, of the commands of the Church. So what? Faith is the evidence of things that appear not. Christ was the Servant of Yahweh. A servant obeys! He became obedient even to death on a cross. How unreasonable! Yet it was the salvation of the world.

We, if we follow Christ, must be servants: It is all right to ask questions. But today, one gets the feeling we're not asking questions of the Church, but that we're telling the Church.

It must always be the other way around. Like Christ, the Church commands. Our role is the servant's role: to obey. And to obey zealously. The

I question the Catholicity of those who take the last pew when the Church is not filled — physically separating themselves as far as possible from the action of the priest. I wonder at the presence in church of those who stand in the vestibule, conversing among themselves when their dialogue should be with God.

I hope for the alacrity of those who will not open their mouths to respond to the invitations of the priest to pray. I fall to understand the purpose of those who Sunday after Sunday arrive at church late — holding little or no respect for the Sacred Word I marvel at the compulsion of those who consistently leave the church before the priest leaves the sanctuary.

The renewal of the liturgy does not come from just a change in language, the introduction of song, the simplification of ritual; it comes first from a renewal in the individual. Each of us must decide to LIVE the role expected of us.

— Kenneth A. Scariolotta
St. Ambrose Parish, Rochester

Mutual Love

In two columns on the liturgy (Commentary Page) you noted that it has been five years since we as a Christian community first began to put into effect the liturgical directives flowing from Vatican II. These revisions affected us in an intimate way in our celebration of the Mass.

Now, five years later, there seems to be among Catholics generally a great deal of confusion, anxiety, unhappiness, apathy and lack of understanding.

It seems to me the Church has suffered a severe trauma because the liturgy remained static for four or more centuries. We experience this when revisions in the manner of offering Mass, and an up-dated approach to the Sacrament of Penance, cause pain very similar to the physical pain of using muscles long inactive and immobilized.

An important ingredient for an effective solution to the sorrow, fear and confusion afflicting the Body of Christ in this year of 1969 could be developed in a renewal of mutual trust, respect and love for each other. It seems to me that priest and people must bring to the Mass a mutual love for Christ, our High Priest, and love for each other to heal the wound.

Prayers of the Mass — whether by priest or lector — should be recited or read in such a manner that they can be heard and understood by the entire congregation. Most especially, during the offering of the new Eucharistic Prayers and the Consecration and Elevation, the priest would reflect a loving dialogue with the laity, maintaining it by vocal expression, visual contact, and gesture.

This is the manner in which the priest of my parish celebrates Mass, and I recognize it to be a principal reason for my personal happiness and joy in liturgical renewal.

It seems to me also that love of priests for the laity would further motivate them in sermons and homilies to share with us the fresh insights of Vatican II relating to the Priesthood of the Faithful, the role of the scriptures in our personal lives, and the historical and scriptural background relating to liturgy revisions. Without these insights it is difficult to respond to some of the revisions, and to understand why the Mass which has been so familiar to us since childhood should be changed.

It will take time — much longer than five years — to perfect a new liturgy; but if priests and people hold each other in mutual trust, respect and love, this should become a work of joy.

— Miss Lucy Sheehan,
Rochester.

COURIER-JOURNAL
BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN
President
Mgr. John S. Randall Managing Editor
Rev. Richard Torney Editor
Anthony J. Costello Advertising Director
Carmen J. Vigiucci Associate Editor
Arthur P. Farber Associate Editor

MAINTENANCE OFFICE: 35 So. State St., Rochester, N. Y. 14609
EDITORIAL OFFICE: 317 Robinson Bldg., 1st Fl., RE 2-6808 or RE 2-3023
ADVERTISING OFFICE: 14 E. Genesee St., RE 2-6808 or RE 2-3023

Norlyn Brograders in fr schools will

Kids, To Siz

Boys and girls next September opportunity Sunday the status of all Catholic high school

Displays from available at two Cardinal Mooney Lady of Mercy E

Programs at open with talks

A Thousand

TV AL

In a half-hour Tuesday on Channel 5 area flowers will be the "divine" word.

Utilizing slide early church attendees, rated by Howard the establishment diocese by P. 3, 1868, with B. Quaid as found

But, as the out the establish of Rochester was max to the Cl had taken place before — as the first recorded bark chapel in Village south of

A Mass in not celebrated, interestingly, of Colonel Nath what was the p not explained

(It came) house guest of ill and asked to move. The p come all the City, ministered offered Mass at Exchange an

Five years York had been when St. Peter Street and Ply to be supplied structures in the church was ded Rochester Dioc

Other churches first Diocese of New York open St. Mary's to the Sisters of to serve the co ways.

Meanwhile came a nation establishment system, which tary school pr include the hig

The founding inary and St. Aged set the stions dedicated that were to College, St. Jo numerous high tary schools.

Bishop ICQU Bishop Hilkey

Christmas "banner year" according to Center director

The annual pea made thr nal yield 18 before for local G. Charbonna

Albany, \$2,000 of the Courier-Journal twenty spec

"Many peopl