

Liturgical Renewal To Be Meeting Topic

The Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen, pointing to its next general meeting on Wednesday, March 27, where the agenda includes discussion of "The Liturgy and the Layman", offer the following first of a two-part series on liturgical renewal. Readers interested in learning more about the association may write to R.A.C.L., 360 San Gabriel Drive, Rochester, 14610.

"Could it be that the meaning of the Mass has changed in the past five hundred years because its form has not?"

My pastor posed this question in a recent homily devoted to a discussion of the new Eucharistic Prayers. His remarks suggested that he believed this to be the case and most Catholics would probably be inclined to agree with him in welcoming the most recent liturgical innovation.

The liturgy may be defined simply as "community prayer" and the Mass represents its most frequent and its most complete expression. It must be regarded as the true manifestation of the Church as the People of God and our only means of continuous encounter with the living Christ.

Accounts of the power of the liturgy in the early church are most inspiring but they bear little resemblance to our recollections of the monotony of low Masses of only a few short years ago.

Father John Powell, S.J., in his book "The Mystery of the Church", suggests that the decline of the liturgy began in the Middle Ages. While monks in their monasteries continued to be moved and sustained by daily practice of the liturgy, the common people had little understanding of the Latin language and could not comprehend these esoteric goings-on. Those prayers which were made intelligible to the poorly educated layman were largely devotional in nature so that the biblical character of the liturgy and the sense of history and community which it fosters were gradually lost.

In the sixteenth century the Council of Trent recognized the need for reform and its work led to the practice of educating laymen regarding the meaning of the liturgy. Latin was retained, however, and the sense of separation between the laity and the hierarchy was not eliminated by this constructive but limited measure.

It remained for Vatican II to take the steps which would restore the liturgy to the entire Church, to all of the People of God. The liturgical

movement had been gathering force, both in Europe and in America, for several decades. The directions which liturgical reform should take had been well marked and the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy", the first completed work of the Council, provided for implementation of many needed changes. A general restoration of the liturgy based on evolution from existing forms was recommended.

Revision of the rite of the Mass "in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts can be more clearly manifested" was specifically directed. Particular attention was paid to the need for increased use of the language of the people.

As sports writers so often say, "The rest is history." Post-conciliar commissions have performed their tasks well. Rites have been simplified and made more meaningful. Participation of the laity as a body and through the persons of lectors and commentators has been encouraged. The importance of music to the liturgy has been re-emphasized and the entire atmosphere of community worship has been brightened to an exhilarating degree by ever-increasing use of the vernacular. Most recently, the variety and beauty of liturgical expression has been expanded by the introduction of the new Eucharistic Prayers.

Diocesan liturgical commissions have been formed to stimulate the intelligent practice of community prayer. This interest also occupies the attention of numerous Catholics such as the group of seminary students who sought information regarding attitudes in the Church toward the liturgy in last week's "Courier". One of the nine objectives of the Rochester Association of Catholic Laymen, as specified in its constitution, is "to accelerate liturgical renewal." Because of its importance and because of the high level of interest which exists among Catholics, "Liturgical Renewal" will be the subject of the next general meeting of R.A.C.L. at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27, at the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Prince St., Rochester.

(To Be Continued Next Week)

COMMENTARY

Courier-Journal—Friday, March 14, 1969 21

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

The Gospel is the Cure of Racism

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Last September I went to a communications workshop at the Buffalo Seminary at East Aurora. Among the workshop staff were three Sisters, the kind without religious garb. One was gracious. One was intense. One wore earrings. They were bright, articulate and had "strong personalities."

In the middle of a discussion among thirty priests, the "Sister" with the earrings erupted: "Why aren't there any black priests here?" There was a stunned silence. Some priest replied, mildly-wise man that he was: "There are only two Negro priests in the diocese." "Then why aren't they here?" she demanded. "There should be some black priests here!"

I conjured to myself a vision of Sister Demanda chaining a couple of unwilling black priests and marching them triumphantly into the Seminary, not for the purpose of the workshop, but to satisfy her own particular enthusiasm. I thought: "How silly can a person be?"

On Tuesday of last week I read about black seminarians taking over part of Colgate Theological Seminary in Rochester. (D & C March 4) The next day a group of black collegians took over the Faculty Lounge at the U of R. Fortunately, these seizers were not the vandalistic kind who dirty, destroy and defile. But after reading their demands, viz. a drastic increase of black professors, trustees and students, I thought: "That's kind of silly."

The whole world is short of doctors because there aren't enough medically trained men to qualify for the work. The seizers agitate for more blacks to be put into positions which require high qualifications. The number they demand is nonexistent. As far as ramming unprepared students into Universities is concerned, what a cruelty to force such students into a university because of a color phobia, to have them rejected later because of academic unpreparedness.

Carl Rowan, a Negro columnist who is not silly, not unrealistic, and not

racist, wrote: "Men honestly concerned about the future of black students ponder the wisdom of setting up full courses of study in black history and black culture when they know that what these young Negroes need desperately, if they are to succeed in American society, is some reading-ability, some mathematics, some proficiency in communicating."

"University administrators fret over demands that they increase sharply the number of black students on their campuses. Must we enroll more even though we know that a high percentage will flunk out — or is there something we ought to be doing to ensure that more of them succeed in college? they ask."

"Overriding the violence and stupidity is this simple fact: Confused though many are, these students are saying to the predominantly white university personnel: Do something to show that you respect black people, that you appreciate what we have contributed to this country. . . . It is in the interest of us all, that these youngsters make good."

"I cling to my view that none of the grievances of students, black or white, justifies violence, destruction of property or forcibly taking over buildings. The penalties for such behavior ought to be clear and certain. But college administrators must separate what are reasonable requests from nonsense — and act on them promptly. It may cost some money,

but it will not be nearly as costly as the destructive chaos that now passes for college life and education."

Racism, whether in whites or blacks, is a virus contrary to the Gospel. But because of traditions, mores, ignorance, bad experiences, the virus is in most whites and blacks in a varying degree. Just as in the body, stubborn viruses are hard to get rid of, so in the body of society, spiritual viruses are hard to get rid of.

Legislation may help, but the permanent antidote to racism, black or white, comes from the Gospel. "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is the Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him." (Rom. xii 12)

With God there is no distinction of color. But the destruction of the virus of racism comes not from much talking or from rioting or from foolish concessions, but from living the Gospel in that love which St. Paul epitomizes thus: "Love is patient, is kind" (1 Cor. xviii)

Sydney Harris expresses well the basis from which kindness must work: "It's strange that so many people are concerned about 'militance' who aren't at all concerned about the conditions that give rise to militance. . . . The militancy is only a symptom, and most of us deplore the symptom while ignoring the disease it symbolizes." (D & C March 7)

Contraception OK Denied By Cardinal

Vienna — (NC) — Cardinal Francis Koenig of Vienna, president of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, denied reports that the Austrian bishops have approved the use of contraceptives by Catholics.

Reports appearing in a number of U.S. newspapers said the Austrian bishops had ruled that Austrian Catholics may use contraceptives if their consciences permit. The newspaper reports relied on news agency dispatches.

According to the news agency reports, the study said: "It is not enough that new life is created as a result of marriage. The new life must have the opportunity to realize itself under favorable social conditions."

Cardinal Koenig confirmed the publication of a study of Pope Paul VI's birth control encyclical, "Humanae Vitae," by Msgr. Karl Hoermann, professor of moral theology at the University of Vienna, and said the study had been made at the request of the Austrian bishops.

But the Cardinal emphasized the study was a private view and not a statement by the bishops. They have not issued any official approval of Msgr. Hoermann's views, he said. The Austrian bishops' last official statement on the encyclical was issued Sept. 23 of last year.

The Cardinal also said no further comment by the Austrian bishops on the encyclical was intended at the moment.

The reports described the study as disputing the contentions of Humanae Vitae that birth control violates the "natural law" of God. "Many problems are not clearly or adequately explained in Humanae Vitae, which opens the way to a wide variety of interpretations by different church authorities," the study said, according to the report.

The Austrian bishops' September statement on the encyclical praised the view of marriage presented by the Pope and said he had confirmed the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the obligation of Christian couples to practice responsible parenthood.

The Austrian bishops went on to say: "We must want to make it clear that the reasons for the limitation of the number of children must be of a moral nature. It would be false and wrong to shun the birth of a child for reasons of convenience and aversion to sacrifice. Conscience may not be replaced by chemical means."

The bishops also stressed the proper formation of conscience and, after referring to the competence of the Church's teaching office with regard to "the natural truth on which the light of revelation also shines," said: "There is freedom of conscience, but not freedom in the formation of conscience."



Protestant Eucharist Interpretations

(NC News Service)

Vatican City — Charles Cardinal Journet, after observing that Protestants who seek Eucharistic intercommunion with Catholics think they and Catholics hold the same Eucharistic beliefs, said that the Church "would cease to exist" if it accepted Calvinistic or Lutheran interpretations of the Eucharist.

In entire good faith, Protestants who are partisans of intercommunion say that they believe just what we believe and that therefore they can be welcomed at our Eucharist," wrote the Swiss theologian in L'Osservatore Romano.

The reason for this is that they regard all that separates us from them in the doctrine of the Eucharist as secondary, accidental, destined to

disappear one day, and by that fact practically negligible."

Cardinal Journet cited a book on the Eucharist entitled "Le Pain" (The Sole Bread), edited at the Protestant monastery of Taizé, France, which holds there are three ways of understanding the Real Presence: "transubstantiation for the Council of Trent (which shaped the Church's reply to the Protestant Reformation), Consubstantiation for Luther, and concomitance for Calvin."

Cardinal Journet commented that the Church will never accept the essential equivalence between the doctrine of the Council of Trent and the opposing doctrines.

The day in which the Church would accept it, she would cease to exist, she would become Protestant."

CHURCH AND THE CITY

Prophets Abound; Planners Needed

By Father P. David Finks

Dick Gregory, professional comedian and full-time prophet, spoke at City Club last week. Dressed in a blue Edwardian jacket he stood at the podium for almost two hours and preached a sermon for a Lenten afternoon.

Like a good prophet, he said we must listen to the strident voices of our day — the "kids", the Blacks, the poor, or our society will come tumbling down around our ears. In a deeply serious mood Gregory explained that these "young kids" are demanding a moral reform of our racist, materialistic institutions in the United States.

Dick Gregory fasts like a prophet. He sacrifices the greater part of his yearly income. A secular man, he travels from city to college campus to night clubs like a jet-set Francis of Assisi, trying to shake us out of our lethargy.

We need a crop of prophets quite regularly according to our Judeo-Christian tradition to sensitize us to God's Word. The danger is still idolatry, listening to nothing but old recordings of God's voice or just not listening at all.

Prophets usually are very unexpected people. Part of their effectiveness is in their shock value. They are seldom popular for very long — this is one of the marks of prophetic authenticity.

Ours is an age of upheaval, so we have no dearth of prophets. As an other contemporary institution, with a serious gap between rhetoric and performance, the church has come in

for a prophetic drubbing these past few years. The required response as Isaiah reminds us is not long fasts, mournful faces, ritual acts, but conversion of our way of life.

It seems therefore, that we now sorely need a few planners and politicians in the ranks of the baptized to implement the cries of the prophets.

The anguished demands for seminary reform by the Black students at Colgate Rochester Divinity School will be ineffectual unless they can negotiate with the administration a workable alternative plan.

Many decry the irrelevance of our outmoded parochial school system. Serious plans are necessary to use our competent teachers, school buildings, traditional concern for young people to fulfill contemporary human needs. Prophets without planners lead to a high level of institutional and individual frustration.

Someone has said that there is a need for social progressives who are political conservatives. The church could use clergy and laymen who can produce the careful organization and practical planning that will develop a church institution more attuned to the human needs of people of our time.

This demands going the exhausting route of research, planning, raising money and hammering out action programs that are workable and marketable.

The newly formed local Association of Catholic Laymen has some

absolute and dedicated leaders. They need money and members with ideas and talent. Metro Act of Rochester, an interfaith effort, needs support from parish social action groups to work on the community needs of metropolitan Rochester.

The Eastern Vicariate of the diocese is mounting a serious development program with rural and urban poor under the fine leadership of Father Raymond Wahl. The Elmira-Corning parishes are beginning to pool their resources and social mission with the other churches in the area in a development program for the Chemung Valley.

Rochester has a whole network of community ministries in city and suburb that work with estranged youth, elderly, the prison and court system, parents and teachers in public schools, neighborhood conservation.

Your own parish is probably in the process of developing a parish council. Amidst the parochial concerns of mortgages, school bills and CCD, they must develop a greater concern for the total community surrounding the parish church.

Pope Paul VI in his much less controversial encyclical, the Progress of Peoples, said that the development of man is as important as his salvation. If we believe this then serious planning and programs for human development must be developed by the church. And our bishops reminded us at Vatican II that we all are the church.



Word for Sunday

We Have Nothing Without Christ

By Father Albert Shamon

When St. Theresa wanted to build a great orphanage with only fifty cents in her pocket, people laughed. Theresa retorted, "With fifty cents Theresa can do nothing; but with God and fifty cents, there is nothing which Theresa cannot do."

In the beginning of our Lord's public life we read, "Jesus found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.'" Then Philip found Nathaniel and said, "We have found the Messiah." Notice that Philip did not tell it the way it was. Jesus had found Philip, it was not the other way round.

But this was always the trouble with Philip, he constantly tended to put the initiative on man's side, not on God's. So of the Twelve, Christ ever asked Philip, "Where shall we ever buy bread for them to eat?" Philip's answer betrayed he still thought that things start from man's side. "With two-hundred days' wages we could

not buy enough to let each have a morsel."

Our Lord had not said, "Where shall you ever buy bread for them to eat?" but we — you and I, Philip hadn't noticed the "we." He had left Jesus out of his calculations. No wonder he saw only a problem and no solution!

How often people faced with dark and difficult problems say, "I don't know what I shall do!" "How shall I ever get through this?" "How can I ever make ends meet?"

The trouble is with that perpendicular "I." They use "I" when using "we" would solve the problem: "we" — "Jesus and I."

Often Christ puts problems to us to see if we can rise above material considerations. When He confronted Philip with a problem, Philip imme-

diately took inventory of his material resources. But he left out the one resource Person who really counted, namely, Christ.

St. Paul says the just man lives by faith, not by the common sense that creeps along on facts and figures and forgets the one fact that nothing is impossible with God. In the present parochial school crisis, for instance, dollars and cents cannot be the whole answer. "We have just as much money," we keep hearing said, "but what is this among so many?" Sounds like Philip, doesn't it?

Maybe God is putting this problem before us to make us realize His work is not all ours alone. What we can do, we must do; give all we have — our five barley loaves. But they must end in the hands of Christ else they remain themselves alone — nothing among so great a crowd!



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