

Feeling 'Liberated'? Try This

Catholic Press Features

Parish organizations may be in the process of updating, but for those who can't wait, satirist P. J. Laux has suggested some new organizations "to which the liberated Catholics can relate":

The Society of St. Tympanitis — "open only to those parishioners who find themselves physically, psychologically or intellectually unable to sing church hymns."

Third Order of St. Bingo — an organization whose purpose "is to establish Bingo as one of the nation's ranking spectator sports" and cash in on TV revenue for such events as a Bingo Super Bowl;

The Vestibule Virgins — to relate to the needs of young people who don't quite get inside the church at Sunday Mass;

The Catholic Hat and Hair Society — devoted to the "haut couture";

Laux is library director at Canisius College, Buffalo, and has written a number of satires on Catholic customs, including a best-selling resolution of the "Purple Nuns of the Divine Retribution" and their rather stern disciplinary measures.

The purpose of his "Society of St. Tympanitis," he explains, "is to find things to do to fill in the gap while others are singing."

"St. Tympanitis, is, of course, the famous tone-deaf martyr who was skewered through the ears with a baton by Cascares Segrada, conductor of the Imperial Roman Choir when he (Tympanitis) refused to join in unsingable pagan hymns (with unspeakable lyrics). (Note: St. Tympanitis was recently declared patron of folk music)."

The Third Order of St. Bingo, in Laux' plans, would promote Bingo as a national television attraction, particularly for that "large, semi-intelligent audience... needing something to fill in the time between Notre-Dame football seasons." Free card corn would be supplied by the Catholic Rural Life Conference and heavy advertising could be expected for the wholesome family-type entertainment.

"Avid supporters claim that TV revenue from Bingo rights could save Catholic higher education," he declares.

The Vestibule Virgins Society would work toward "moving the Mass out into the vestibule—or onto the front sidewalk where the action is." Only "turned on" young priests would be allowed to give sermons to the group and only those hymns certified by a teen committee as "groovy" would be permitted.

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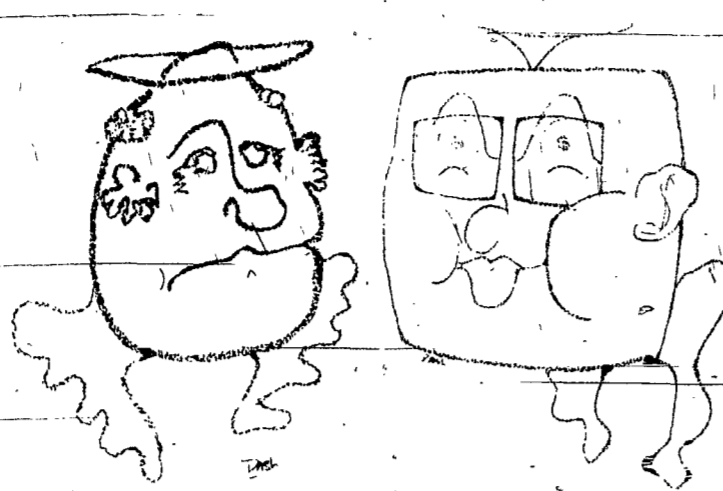
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The Catholic Hat and Hair Society would be a ladies' society that would "ask significant questions of the modern female—'Is there a place for a 'Marylike' miniskirt? 'What is the proper height of a Christian hemline? Can one spiritualize a Metreball diet?' and 'Should stretch pants be worn at a shrine?'"

"There are, of course, many other possibilities for organizations and you may be sure that, given time, someone will think of them and ask us to join," Laux concludes. "These, however, should suffice to indicate the direction in which we should be moving toward the exit—fast!"



ST. TYMPANITIS ST. BINGO

Unit Urges Religious Information Offices

New Orleans — (NC) — Religious and lay participants in the first nationwide communications institute sponsored by the U.S. Catholic bishops voted overwhelmingly to establish diocesan offices of religious information to distribute more news stories for general audience daily and weekly papers.

There was some negative response on the effectiveness of local diocesan papers, especially in covering controversial stories.

Some 65 priests, Sisters and laymen from throughout the country were chosen to learn new techniques in electronic media in hopes that they would get more television time when they returned to diocesan communication posts.

The six weeks institute, held at Loyola University here, ended July 18.

Most participants agreed local papers should be more attuned to church changes, and perhaps this should be presented through television because of the greater impact and larger viewing audiences.

Rather than promote straight religious programming, or discussions of matters of faith, participants were looking for a more "soft sell" format that would appeal to a general audience while presenting a message under the surface.

Participants said the institute showed them the importance of better TV coverage of religious events, and they were

going to press strongly for more money to produce their own shows. Even without additional funds, television directors claimed more time was available free of charge for religious matters if it was professionally presented.

What seemed more acceptable was religion as such, however, not necessarily just the Catholic viewpoint. It would seem that programs which were ecumenically acceptable would get better prime time, which necessarily influences the type of show to be presented.

In the survey, most responses centered around the ability of the diocesan paper to cover religious issues not touched in the dailies, and to give a sense

of community and identity to the Church community.

Others saw its best function as in-depth analysis and reporting of religious events, giving closer commentary of Church changes to stimulate Catholic thinking.

It was generally agreed towards the end of the institute that a multi-media approach was becoming necessary if the Church is to keep up with the times. With their newly acquired knowledge, institute members hope to go back to their respective dioceses and "establish a nationwide network of professional communicators for the Church," with membership growing each year as the institute continues its summer program.

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