

Area Priests Attend Liturgy Conference

By MSGR. WILLIAM SHANNON
Chairman, Diocesan Liturgical Commission

For four days in Pittsburgh last week, a delegation of ten priests from our diocese joined more than 500 priests, religious and laymen for a national conference on liturgy.

These delegates from Liturgical Commissions from practically every diocese in the U.S. had come together for a very practical purpose. Within the next few months an important series of changes will be introduced into the liturgical celebrations of the Church. The diocesan liturgists wanted to prepare themselves to help prepare their dioceses for the changes.

The task of these delegates was to spend four days together discussing the Vatican documents promulgating these new developments and devising ways and means of presenting them

in their respective dioceses, so that the transition to new liturgical forms in the Church may be made smoothly and intelligently.

There was wide-spread agreement on the part of the delegates present that past changes in the liturgy had been badly handled; changes had been introduced without adequate preparation of priests and people.

There was a general conviction that the liturgical changes of the past few years which, with proper instruction and adequate formation, might have strengthened the faith-dimension of the Christian community, had, because such instruction and formation were notoriously lacking, produced instead a backlash of reaction and opposition to change.

Coupled with this conviction was the determination on the part of those present that

there must be no recurrence of this unfortunate state of affairs. Before the introduction of the new ordinary of the Mass, the marriage rite, the new funeral rite, the new lectionary and calendar, there must be, they all agreed, an intensive educational program in each diocese aimed at helping priests and people to understand what is happening and why.

If such a program is carried out, the changes in the liturgy that can be expected within the next few months will appear to people not as a threat to life-long ways of doing things, but as a welcome development of the changes already made by the Church in the way She worships God and welds His people into one.

Our diocesan delegates who attended the meeting included: Msgr. William Shannon, chairman of the Liturgical Commission of the diocese; Fr. James

Moynihan, the Commission's secretary; Fr. Benedict Ehmman, chairman of the diocesan music Commission and for many years a recognized leader of the liturgical movement in the United States. Also Msgr. Charles Boyle and Fathers Robert McNamara, John-Hedges, Edward Steinkirchner, David Simon, Louis Brown and Ronald Harley, all members of the newly structured Liturgical Commission of the diocese of Rochester.

Most of the delegates saw little more of Pittsburgh than the inside of the William Penn Hotel, as a heavy round of scheduled meetings, as well as informal gatherings in hotel rooms, engaged them from early morning till late at night means of carrying out in their own dioceses the responsibilities that belonged to them as members of diocesan liturgical commissions.

There was much concern in the various discussions that the liturgical renewal in the Church should not be isolated from the total context of the theological growth of the Church.

Liturgy is much more than the performance of ritual. It is the community of God's people, striving to become more fully His people. As one of the speakers pointed out, liturgy is no mere narcissistic introversion: it is not simply people coming together to say that friendship is good or to cement their relationships with one another in a closed group.

Liturgy is people coming together to celebrate their solidarity with Christ, to deepen the faith-dimension of their lives, to remember that, like Christ, they are to be servants that like Him they are to be for others. Liturgical reforms, until they are seen in perspective, are futile and useless.

Involved in the Pittsburgh meeting were Archbishop Byrne, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, Fr. Frederick McManus, secretary of the Bishops' Commission and his associate, Fr. Joseph Champlin, a priest from the diocese of Syracuse. They voiced the concern of the Bishops' Committee that there be

extensive programs of liturgical education throughout the country. Stressing the importance of flexibility in the celebration of the liturgy, they pointed out the many options that are now possible in such celebrations and the need of planning each liturgical celebration rather than simply letting it happen.

A big step toward bridging a communication gap between the Bishops' Commission and the dioceses was taken with the formation of a national Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions — a federation made up of regions covering all the dioceses of the country. One of the many unofficial meetings held was a gathering of 50 delegates from the 8 dioceses in the New York State Region of the Federation.

The Rochester delegation has returned with the determination to do everything possible to help priests and people to make the liturgy what Vatican II says it is: "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed and the fount from which all her power flows."



St. Peter's Basilica, the Papal Palace and a passing policeman are reflected in a pool of water after a heavy rainfall. (RNS)

Flying Priest Saved After 23-Day Hike

Prince George, B.C.—(RNS) — Lost for 23 days in the bush after his plane crashed, Sgt. 12, Father Emil Sages, 38, walked out under his own power, and said it was a "miracle" he was still alive.

The flying Roman Catholic priest of a frontier parish said "I spent most of my nights praying to God. He must have answered my prayers."

Father Sages disappeared in the Cariboo Mountains, about 350 miles north of Vancouver, while on a routine 100-mile flight to his home in Valemount, B.C. from Wells, B.C.

For two weeks after crash-landing his 85-horsepower Jodel aircraft, the priest lived in a mountain-top burrow, eating sparingly of a week's supply of canned food he had in the aircraft. He made the food last more than three weeks.

At the end of two weeks, he made the decision to start walking out. He made the 40 rugged miles in nine days and was found by a man who was not part of a search party.

Admitted to the regional hospital here, he was found to have lost 40 pounds during his ordeal—from 180 to 120.

The priest had no radio to broadcast his distress. He searched several glaciers in

seeking a landing spot, then saw a meadow, which he circled to use up gasoline.

"When I went in for a landing, I had never seen any wind that hit me like this one," he said. "It was at least 80 m.p.h. and it caught me flat, five feet off the ground."

The day after his crash landing, eight inches of snow fell. He had two down-filled coats with him.

After two weeks, he started the long trek out by walking, swimming and crashing through the bush country. At one point he built a raft on the Cariboo river, but the 12-knot current kept running him into trees and snags.

Finally, the raft sank and the priest and his provisions went into the water. He doesn't remember for how long, but he managed to save some food.

Then he walked through the "bush" and along animal trails until found.

Church Urged To Offer Use Of Cemeteries

New Orleans—(RNS)—Catholic cemetery directors should offer their facilities to other Christians, the 22nd annual convention of the National Catholic Cemetery Conference was told here.

John F. Philbin, executive director of cemeteries in Chicago, predicted that Catholic cemeteries will become the bulk of what remains of Christian burial areas.

The Catholic cemeteries, he said, "might attract men and women of good will who see something in the idea of life after death."

"We have been hearing more so-called resurrection theology and hearing ourselves described as Children of the Resurrection. Our new funeral rites strongly emphasize this. It seems to me this is something important to share with our non-Catholic brethren and I cannot think of a more likely and logical place to share in, than in a Catholic cemetery."

U.S. Birth Control Role Hit

Washington—(NC)—Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington criticized the expanding role of the U.S. government in foreign and domestic birth control programs, saying these programs constitute "a threat to the privacy and freedom of married couples and contribute to a growing attack on human life itself."

Cardinal O'Boyle said his attitude about public birth control programs "is not shaped by Catholic moral teaching alone, but also and especially by my conviction that our highest public ideals and the common good of all dictate that the government should stay out of the birth control business."

The Cardinal defended what he termed "a certain legitimate role for government" in the area of objective scientific research in this area. But said even here "very serious dangers" have become apparent.

In an address to the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, Cardinal O'Boyle said "every conscientious citizen" should consider three factors:

"First, public programs of birth control do nothing to overcome poverty or misery except to the extent that they succeed in cutting down the number of poor people," he said.

"This negative approach of anti-life programs all too easily becomes an alternative to a positive approach of reconstructing the social order in better accord with the requirements of justice," Cardinal O'Boyle declared.

"And this brings us to a second factor that weighs heavily against public programs of birth control," Cardinal O'Boyle continued. "They are claimed to be completely voluntary. . . . But the fact of the matter is that the poor simply do not have the freedom that the rest of us enjoy."

"When a poor family, in desperate need of public aid, on which the family totally depends for the very possibility of the survival, faces the agents of the government, embarked on an intensive program of population control, the situation is inherently unfree," he said.

"In November 1967, the Catholic bishops of the United States warned against coercive practices by government in fostering population control—especially among the poor and the blacks."

"A third factor is that there is a certain legitimate role for government in the area of objective scientific research," Cardinal O'Boyle said. "However, even in this area there are some very serious dangers . . . clearly apparent today."

"Competent advisors who have studied the technical description of the new research program tell me that much of the planned research is being directed toward the development of techniques that will prevent births not by contraception, but by early abortion," he said.

"In some cases the abortion would be induced soon after conception, and in other cases at a later date, after the new human being had been

well established in his mother's womb.

"There is a terrible irony in the fact that a government agency called the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development should be engaged in research to expedite death."

Irish Cardinal To Mete Funds Raised in U.S.

Newark (NC)—William Cardinal Conway of Armagh, Northern Ireland, will be in charge of the disbursement of funds being raised in the United States to help Catholics in his country.

This was revealed here by Michael L. Delahunty, national president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, on his return from a three-week fact-finding trip to Ireland.

The AOH has announced a drive to begin Oct. 16 to raise \$1 million for the relief of victims of recent rioting in Northern Ireland and Delahunty will head the drive. He said that it will be conducted by a professional fund-raising organization.

Delahunty, 42, is a native of Ireland who is in his second year as president of the AOH. "I was dumbstruck when I saw the conditions," he said. "There are over 20,000 people homeless."

Delahunty said that his organization intended to raise money for the relief of all victims of the rioting, whether Catholic or Protestant. But he said that he doubted there would be much need among the Protestant population because a drive being conducted for them in Northern Ireland had already reached close to \$1 million before he left the country.

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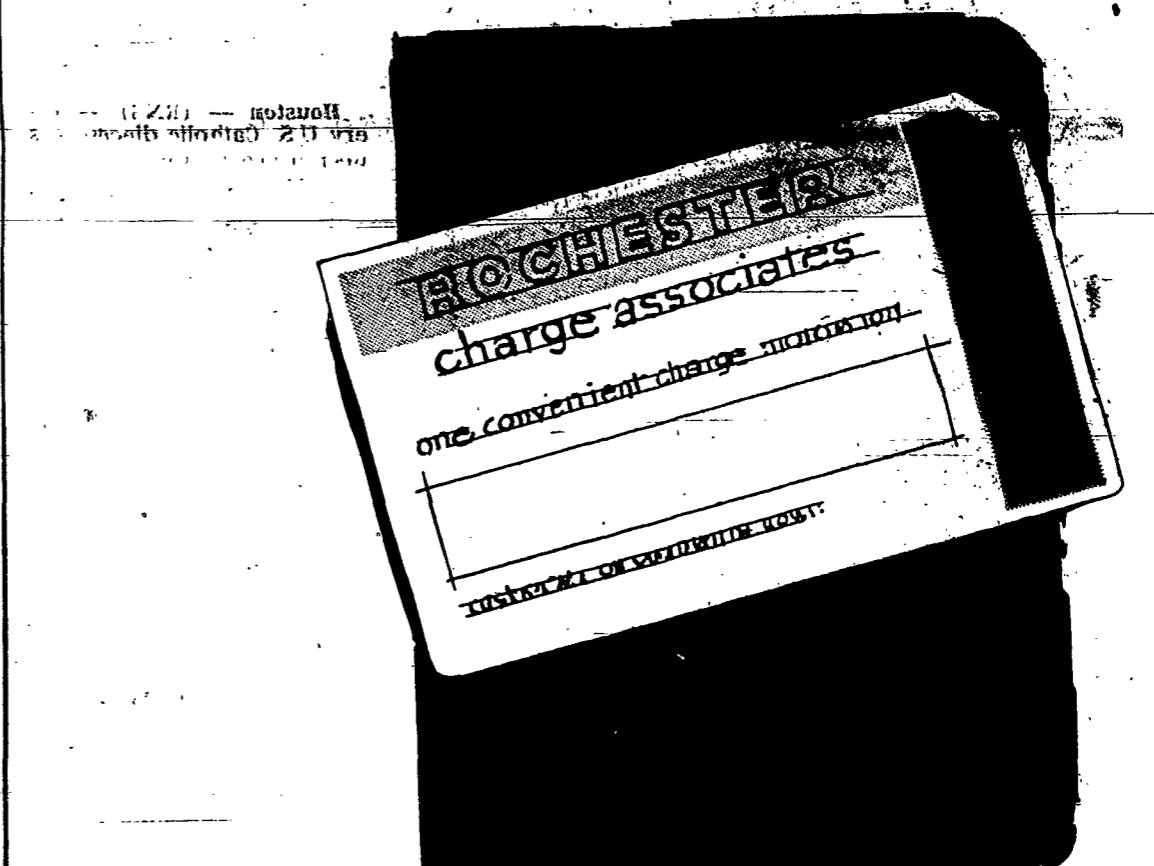
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