

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

A Post Chaplain's Memories -- Part 3

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

A few weeks after Bob W. became a Catholic he bounded into the chapel office, face aglow. "Father, Sgt. X, a master sergeant in our squadron, wants to take instructions."

My reaction was something I never dreamed of in my earlier priesthood. Despite the fact that the Air Force had supplied me with two wonderful secretaries and two superlative military assistants, I had been overloaded with work: spiritual work, social work, counseling work, — and the eternal paper work of the military. Hours were long. Sleep was short.

"Good heaven's, Bob," I groaned. "I haven't got time to instruct him." He was astonished. He was crestfallen. He was silent. Then I added: "I'll tell you what. You instruct him." He was flabbergasted. "Me?" "Yes, you. Why shouldn't you? You've just finished the course. You understand the Faith well. And being a Catholic means you should share in the work of the Church. Why must it always

be a priest who must instruct? Bring Sgt. X in so we can meet. I'll give you the material he will need. You instruct him. And every once in a while have him come in so I can check his progress."

The Sergeant had neither the intellectual interest of Bob, nor his background, but he did have a special incentive: a Catholic wife back home who would be delighted not only that he would share her Faith, but that he would share his religion at all. One thing is sure. He got a far better, far longer and far more thorough course of instruction from the young neo-conversus than he would have gotten from me.

At the 1956 Easter Vigil Service Bob and his catechumen sat in the front seat of the large chapel with two other candidates for Baptism and their sponsors. It was midnight, and 15 miles from Casablanca in North Africa. At the proper time

they all stepped forward. Bob presented his first catechumen for Baptism.

More than ten years later the Council of Vatican II decreed concerning the laity: "The laity derives the right and the duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ the Head. . . . The apostolate is carried on through the faith, hope and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. . . . On all Christians is laid the splendid burden of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world" (Laity—Art. 3).

This Bob did eminently — so much so that along with his devotion to the Mass, to the Blessed Sacrament and the rosary, he brought into the Church his fiancée, and his brother and his sister-in-law. I have always held the theory, that under God's grace, with most converts, the Faith is caught rather than taught.



The New Order of the Mass

(This is the fourth in a series of articles on the new Order of the Mass.)

By REV. VINCENT J. GIESE (NC News Service)

"Let us Pray." With three simple words, the priest at Mass calls the People of God to worship.

The call comes early in the Entrance rite and immediately after a silent pause for recollection, but not until the assembly has been disposed for prayer.

Everything that has gone before — the entrance song, accompanied by a procession, the sign of the Cross, the announcement of the theme of the Mass, the communal act of penance, and the Gloria to God — has been in preparation for the moment when the priest convokes the Christian community for prayer.

"Let us Pray" tells us that we are about to experience what it means to be Church, which is another way of defining the Mass.

The people are now ready to celebrate the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. They are ready to enter relationships with Christ, with the world, and with one another.

Culminating in the call to prayer, the entire Entrance rite has served to create an atmosphere for worship, announce a theme, give a coloration and set a tone for the Mass, which always must be the expression and formation of the spirituality of the assembled community.

Every liturgy has its preparatory rituals — from a family reunion, to a New Year's Day football game, to the liturgy of the Christian Church.

The ritual may be a family project of decorating the Christmas tree or a parade of roses through Pasadena before the game. For Christians preparing to celebrate Mass, it is the Entrance rite that sets the scene.

Mass begins the very moment that the priest walks in. He is THE representative of

the community, the spokesman who articulates the sentiments, hopes, desires and dispositions of the assembly. He calls the people of God to order.

The opening song selected to unite the people around a common action and common idea can either be the Introit antiphon and psalm, a seasonal alternate from the simple Gradual, or an approved hymn, appropriate to the day. The Introit may be recited by all, or alternated with the lector. Music, however, has a special power to create unity.

After kissing the altar, the priest goes to the presidential chair, where he makes a sign of the Cross with the people as the sign that all are gathered in the name of the Trinity.

Then he greets his people. He welcomes them to the celebration with the usual, "The Lord be with you," or with one of two longer salutations taken from the Epistles: "May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you," or, "The grace and peace of God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

Either the priest or the commentator introduces the theme of the Mass of the day. A communal penitential act follows as the people prepare themselves for the Eucharist by acknowledging their shortcomings with sorrow and an appeal for forgiveness.

The priest invites the people to repent their sins: "Brothers, let us acknowledge our sins, so that we may be fit to celebrate the sacred mysteries." One of three alternative forms of the act of penance follows.

"The Lord have mercy," now said three times (not nine) with response, closes the penitential rite. It is not repeated if already included in the penitential act itself.

The Gloria hymn, when prescribed, occupies its customary place but now becomes a resume of all that has gone before. It further emphasizes that the people are gathered in the presence of Jesus Christ, the Lord who is exalted "with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father."

Finally, the Entrance rite

comes to a close with a prayer offered in the name of all by the celebrant who has been designated to preside over the assembly. His congregation is sufficiently unified now that he can speak in their name with one voice.

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

A Little Old Lady with a Message

By Sarah Child

There are times, particularly during the rush and bustle of holiday preparations, that the move from the house to the car becomes so frantic and the pressure so great that we members of the fairer sex are apt to throw up our hands in despair over what seems like a hopeless task.

Sweeping up the pine needles for the 10th time on the first day the tree is in the house coupled with cookies that won't brown, cookies that brown too fast, plus a package discovered after the trip to the Post Office are only starters.

By noon, some of us, me in particular, are growling at the children as if they were enemies in a not particularly cold war rather than remembering the reason for which most of this effort is being made.

Spilled milk which is a daily occurrence at our house and over which I seldom blink an eye becomes a conspiracy against me.

A "no" from either child seems like the worst kind of mutiny and even a telephone call from a neighbor who only wants to chat a while seems like a willful intrusion and waste of my time.

Then to add to the tempest, the 2-year-old obviously feeling like he's been shoved around enough for one

day picks up the entire creche and dashes it against the wall.

"What's the use?" I mutter repetitiously asking for pity.

I see the looks on the faces of my two companions in chaos and the self-pity turns to shame for managing so poorly.

And it is just about that time that I remember my little old lady in the black coat.

She came into my life about two years ago, remained there 10 minutes and left never to be seen again but I think of her often — and usually at times such as the one I've described.

It was shortly after our second baby arrived and I was feeling trapped. The elation of having a new member in the family had faded just a little and taking its place was the trapped feeling.

My husband prescribed the remedy. A shopping trip downtown would help.

But it didn't help. I made my way through the stores half tired and only thinking about going back to the house where both children would be vying for attention.

Perhaps a cup of coffee, I thought, and made my way into the cafeteria-style restaurant of one of the stores.

I found a table after going through the line and sat down only to have an elderly lady immediately sit down across from me without asking.

She never looked at me or at anyone else for that matter, but pulled out what was obviously a much read and dog-eared letter.

Her age I placed at well past 80 and she had that fragile yellow look about her that denotes the fading years. Much too old I thought to be sitting there by herself with no one to care how she fared in the crowds. I drank my coffee trying not to watch her smoothing the pages, folding them up and smoothing them out again.

It was if it was her only contact with other beings, that she had nothing else but these pieces of paper.

How long I wondered, since a baby had touched her face, caught her hair in his fingers, cried on her shoulder? How long since a little girl had needed her to hear her prayers, to come running in the middle of the night when the darkness threatens to kiss a finger pinched by a toy?

I did not go bouncing home that day, changed miraculously to an uncomplaining mother by who had seen time to time to the picture of her comes back to haunt me — the woman that nobody needed.



646,000 Defend Prayers in Space

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — Some 646,000 persons recorded signatures on petitions supporting the right of space-traveling astronauts to broadcast Bible readings and prayers.

The signatures were accumulated by Steve Garbelle and his wife following efforts by a well-known atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair to ban such transmissions after the flight of Apollo 8 last Christmas, when prayers were read from the spacecraft. A court rejected her complaint.

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Drink A Cup Of Mixed Emotions

Does New Year's Eve find you with mixed emotions? There's the nostalgia when "old acquaintances" get together recalling the good times of the past or the happy and sad times of 1969. Or does the spirit of a new year make you refreshed to begin again . . . or weary?

Some may view 1970 with anxious anticipation; some with lonely melancholy; some with fear and insecurity at what the months ahead hold for us, our families, our world. Where will we be this time next year? Who will be born, and who will die? What changes or happenings will 1970 bring to our life-situation: school, career, marriage, home, problems, money, and health?

If such mixed emotions are universal, the circumstances are vastly different. Some two-billion people meet the 70's in the life of the Third World. Their thoughts are whether they will even survive another year . . . or if it's even worth it. Many look at their children (as we do) and wonder not what they will be when they grow up, but will they grow up at all? What does life hold for a child who knows only illiteracy, poverty, and disease?

Happiness for the people of the Third World is not the memory of the good old days, but the possible hope for a better future. That hope is realized among the fortunate ones receiving relief, improvement, and self-development from the services of missionaries. The chance for schools, chapels, medicine, and food is the New Year's prayer of countless Latin Americans, Africans, and Asians.

Will the Church reach them with its services and good news of faith, hope, and love? Are not we, who have been given more, held responsible for that answer? What can we do?

First pray for a peaceful world: a world where men may live and work together for development; a world where the suffering-poor may find a life worth living; a world where Christ may be born to "renew the face of the earth."

Secondly, make a New Year's Resolution: that the development of peoples be your personal concern, for if we as Christians do not respond in helping the poor of the world . . . we have failed in our Christianity.

The missionaries of the Church see, not just the challenge of a new year, but of a new world. You can share and even shape that vision by your generous support of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Start the New Year off with a gift for others; please drink a cup of kindness yet for the good things you have had and the good times that be ahead. Others aren't as blessed. Please help them.

Enclosed is my donation for the missions. Please remember my special New Year's intention: . . .

12/26/69

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