

New Liturgy Emphasizes Communion as Spiritual Act

Next Sunday's homily in many churches will cover the Communion rites in the new Order of the Mass, the final instruction for the changes in the liturgy of the Eucharistic which begin March 22.

Father Damasus Winzen, Benedictine Father, founder and now retired Abbot of Mt. Saviour Monastery, has offered the Courier-Journal the following article on the depth of thought encountered in the rites just before and during the moments of Holy Communion.

By Very Rev. Damasus Winzen

The Eucharistic celebration reaches its climax and fully reveals its meaning as a feast in the last part of the Mass, the Rite of Holy Communion.

The purpose of every feast is the transformation and sharing of life. In Holy Communion the Risen Christ shares with us His new life by giving us His body and blood as "medicine of immortality." (Ignatius of Antioch) Through His death and resurrection Christ has become our peace, for through Him we are reconciled with our Heavenly Father and with one another. The risen life in which we share at the Holy Banquet is life in peace and unity.

Consequently the idea of unity dominates the various rites which in the course of time have come to surround the Eucharistic Meal, either to prepare it, or to mark its conclusion.

Unfortunately, in the course of the Middle Ages, the Mass had lost more and more its communal character for lack of active participation on the part of the laity. This affected also the rite of Holy Communion.

Just as people ceased to offer their gifts at the Offertory, so also did the

number of those who took part in the Holy Banquet decline steadily, so that the reception of Holy Communion became more and more the private affair of one or the other devout soul.

As a result, those rites which were designed to awaken in the congregation the spirit of corporate unity so essential to communion, as the Kiss of Peace and the Breaking of the Bread, practically disappeared, while the recitation of the Confiteor and the Absolution became the all-important preparation for the few who had the courage to come up to the altar at communion time.

This state of affairs has been drastically changed by the new Order of the Mass, which has brought order and clarity and active participation into the preparatory rites.

They start, as before, with the communal recitation or singing of the Our Father, which is introduced briefly by the presiding priest with the words: "Let us now with confidence pray to the Father in the Words our Saviour gave us." This confidence we derive from the fact that, during the Eucharistic Prayer we have joined Christ in his sacrifice on the cross through which he has reconciled us with the Father. (cf. Hebrews 10:19) With him we find ourselves now in the Holy of Holies, united as children of our Heavenly Father, in the spirit of mutual reconciliation.

We have arrived at the end, as it were, and it is only natural that the priest in taking up the last petition of the Our Father turns our attention to the Lord's Last Coming, and that we respond and conclude the Our Father with the ancient acclamation: "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen."

One should understand the adoption of this doxology, not as a "concession" to the Protestants, but as the reclaiming of an old possession, which although not a part of the original text of Matthew 6:13, was being used in Christian worship since the end of the first century.

The Our Father is the public proclamation of our unity with God. It is followed immediately by the Kiss of Peace, which seals our unity with one another. Christ is not satisfied with sharing the peace of his Resurrection with each one of us individually.

"Peace" means wholeness. No man is "whole" as long as he is at war with other men. Christ died for all, and so his peace is for all, and so the peace we receive from him is peace for all. It is not my peace, it is our peace. Since this is true, we should not conceal the fact from one another, but overcome all shyness and turn to one another, shaking hands and embracing or whatever may serve the purpose.

To make it clearer that the receiving of Communion is not an individual encounter with my Lord, the new rite recommends that the bread used for the consecration and communion should look like a loaf of bread. The sacramental meaning of the bread is precisely this that all receive from the one loaf, as St. Paul says: "For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." (I Cor. 10:17)

The use of "real bread" makes it possible to restore the ancient use of "breaking the bread." This rite is accompanied by the singing of the "Lamb of God" on the part of the congregation, and in this way the sacrificial character of the Eucharistic meal is once more emphasized, as

well as our constant need for forgiveness on the part of the "Lamb that carries the sin of the world."

The first piece of the Bread which the priest breaks off is put into the Blood in the chalice as a symbol of the resurrection. The Christ of Holy Communion is the Christ of the Resurrection, the living Christ, with Body and Blood reunited.

To all who have followed the rites of preparation for the reception of Holy Communion with understanding it should be clear that the participation in the unity and the peace of Christ is also participation in his holiness.

Therefore, in the praying of the Our Father we ask for forgiveness; by giving one another the kiss of peace we forgive one another; at the breaking of the bread we implore the Lamb of God to have mercy on us. It is evident then, that at this moment we do not need a special act of confession and absolution.

This is the reason why, in the new rite, the priest limits himself to simply holding up the Bread with the words: "This is the Lamb of God who

takes away the sins of the world", and then adds immediately the invitation: "Happy are they who are called to his supper," and the people answer only once: "Lord, I am not worthy . . ."

One could call this last stage in the preparation for Holy Communion "the act of discernment". It heeds the warning of St. Paul: "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (I Cor. 11:27/29)

The new rite wants to establish the right balance by helping the people to realize what they receive, while at the same time inviting them to the supper of the Lamb. At the moment of reception, the old custom has been taken up again, for the priest to say: "The body of Christ" — "The Blood of Christ", echoed by the "Amen" of each one who receives.

At this moment we find ourselves at the place of Thomas, when Jesus appeared on the first Sunday after Easter, saying to his apostles "Peace be to you!", and then addressed Thomas saying: "Put your hand into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered and said: "My Lord and my god." (John 20:26/28)

Our partaking in the supper of the Lamb is a spiritual act, not a "magic" event. It is, therefore, only natural that the new rite, with all its emphasis on the communal aspect of the Mass and of Holy Communion, demands that Communion should be followed by either a pause of silence, or a special song of thanksgiving.

To be silent together at this moment gives room to ponder in the depth of the heart the gift we have received, and to taste how sweet the Lord is, and what happiness it is to anticipate here at the altar in our own togetherness that "communion of saints" which we shall celebrate when it has become manifest what we really are — when God is all in all.

ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Scripture and the Holy Spirit

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Within the past few years a quirk which we used to marvel at in the Witnessess of Jehovah has taken hold of some "progressive" Catholics. It recalls to mind what the Lutheran theologian, Dr. Pelican, said humorously on a TV panel June 18. The panel was discussing "The Crisis in the Catholic Church." He said: "The Catholic Church is trying to make in 25 years all the mistakes it took us Protestants 400 years to make." Some Catholics, along with the Witnessess, have the Holy Spirit and their egos mixed up.

I trust that it is grace and reason which keeps me pretty modest about personal claims of direction by the Holy Spirit. What are the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and what are the emanations from people's ego get awfully confused today.

A CCD teacher in San Antonio was teaching a clear-cut heresy to his class. The pastor, who is responsible for Catholic teaching, remonstrated: "Please teach what the Church teaches." The teacher bristled and retorted, "Father, I am the Church!" No doubt he considered that the Spirit of God spoke through him. I suspect that he was equally convinced that the Spirit did not speak through the pastor.

Rather than compounding complexities, it is valid to teach that the Holy Spirit inspires the Universal Church. The errors of individual Catholics are not the errors of the

teaching Catholic church. They are not from the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding and Knowledge.

Father Michael Ried is a grand young 29-year-old priest of the diocese of Buffalo. Three months ago he had a heart attack. Since he is concluding his convalescence, he came to visit me on Feb. 18 and 19. Now, Father Ried is a skilled musician, who knows the theory and the technical structures of music. He also knows the history of the great musicians and of their music. He teaches music at Notre Dame High School, Batavia. His special instrument is the saxophone. Until I heard him give a concert in Canaseraga last year I was under the delusion that saxophone music was very like the squawking of compounded kazooks. How wrong I was! The sax can be as beautiful as the flute.

For three hours after breakfast he expounded on art, especially musical art. I had the indiscretion to say: "I like to read with a soft symphonic or organ musical background playing." He replied: "But that isn't right! You should listen to music. And you have to study the pieces to appreciate them. It's like the Sacred Scriptures. People can't understand the Scriptures without background; without a knowledge of the significance of special words and customs. Just as you need a good commentary if you're going to understand the Word of God, you must understand a musical composition through study."



Bishop Sheen did many good things during his short stay as Bishop of Rochester. Yet I think one of his most far-reaching effects is the result of a few words. In some message he gave to the people printed in the Courier-Journal, he recommended a set of books called "The Daily Study Bible Series," edited by Rev. William Barclay, and published by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia.

Dr. Barclay is a Scripture scholar. He is also a minister of the Church of Scotland, so there pops up an occasional bit of heresy or questionable comment. But the books are substantially sound, and are full of instruction, information and inspiration.

As a result of Bishop Sheen's recommendation, many priests and many religious houses and convents bought the whole set or a few volumes. Consequently, the people are getting a richer understanding of the Scriptures in the homilies at Mass. And several reading Catholics have bought individual volumes for their private use.

The books are sold for \$2.95 a volume or \$49 for the set of 17 at Scrantom's Book Store, Main Street, Rochester.

If any reader buys e.g. Corinthians, or Timothy, or Luke, or John, he will be appalled at how much he has been missing in the uncritical reading of the New Testament. And he can thank the Spirit of Piety to have found Barclay's "Daily Bible Studies."

COMMENTARY

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

A Pantry by Any Other Name

By Sarah Child

Perhaps the most apt name for the particular storage place in the kitchen that I like to call the "Pantry" would be the hole-in-the-wall. The owner before me referred to it simply as the big cupboard and to the builder it was merely a roomy entry way leading from the kitchen to some cramped little stairs that gave access to the attic.

The word pantry, however, conjures up for me the image of the spacious room off my grandmother's kitchen where she stored a barrel of flour, all of the winter's canned goods put up in glass Mason jars, her washing machine that ran on gasoline and sundry other items. It contained a tiny, dark cubby hole that was great for playing hide and seek with my sister and young aunt.

My grandmother's pantry shall also stand forever romanticized in my mind as the place where my mother, little sister and I hid from an Indian friend of my grandparents. Gilbert had come down from the woods on his monthly visit to collect his government check and had stopped in for breakfast already somewhat exhilarated by a stop elsewhere in

the tiny hamlet for something to drink.

My pantry can hardly hold one of us doubled up, much less a barrel of flour or a washing machine. But I get a certain pleasure from referring to it as that rather than the mundane "cupboard" or utilitarian "closet."

I never have been able to call our "finished" basement "the playroom" or "rumpus room" or anything else but the cellar.

But when my husband partitioned off a small corner of it at my insistence, I put a desk and a typewriter in it and became very grand referring alternately to "my study," "my workroom," and "my office" even though anybody who ever saw it would know immediately that it was the house dump, a repository for everything from newspaper clippings to candle stubs.

My particular brand of semantics becomes confusing elsewhere in the house.

"Put those boots on the back porch," I'll shout and the 5-year-old will look at me shaking her head. She's never lived in a house with such

an appendage but she knows what it is and we don't have one.

I'm referring to a built up section in the attached garage that holds the milk box, sleds, the lawnmower, etc.

My trouble is I've always wanted a back porch—and a front porch and side porches, and a sleeping porch. And there comes a time when my desire for these out-of-style appurtenances gets the better of me.

Outside the house, I can befuddle my city born husband by my insistence on calling a brook, stream or even a river, "the creek."

A sales girl wants to know where I'm from when I tell her not to bother with a box, but put my shoes in a "sack".

And sometimes I think it would help my rather square image if I could learn to say stereo instead of phonograph or record player.

There is hope for me, however, and my antiquated language. It's been a long time since I've used davenport to describe the couch or sofa even though the former has a far nicer ring to it.



EUROPEAN SCENE

He's Revolutionary but Quiet

By Robert Holton

Ravenna, Italy — The man described as Italy's most progressive bishop looks like a professional character actor.

But Archbishop Salvatore Baldassari is not an actor. Right or wrong in some of his advanced views, he has honest and deep convictions about them.

Meeting with the archbishop recently in his ancient, rundown palace here in Northeastern Italy, I found the opposite of what I had expected.

The 63-year-old prelate is not a firebrand. He is subdued almost to a fault.

Likely as not, the visitor will find 10 or 15 men and women lined up in a grubby waiting room outside his office.

"I see anyone who takes the time to come here to see me," the archbishop said.

Also likely as not the visitor will be met at the door personally by the portly archbishop wearing a threadbare black cassock and a long black muffler around his neck.

"Come," he said to this reporter, "we shall go into my office. We can talk there."

The prelate's office is small and cluttered with newspapers, magazines, books piled high on the floor and a desk hidden under a mound of letters and documents.

"These are my little friends," he says, leading the visitor to a cage with two tiny parakeets. "They keep me company with their chirping in the winter."

Soon the visitor notices that the archbishop is not wearing his ring of office. It also becomes evident, as the muffler sags around his thick neck, that he is not wearing a Roman collar.

His soft blue eyes look out onto the world through thick-lensed spectacles. His iron-gray hair is curly and uncombed. He smiles a lot and never frowns.

Born not far from here to parents "more poor than rich," the archbishop studied in Rome and for 20 years taught Church history in a Bologna seminary before being elevated to the hierarchy by Pope Pius XII.

He spoke of some of the problems he faces daily in his pastoral assignment.

"This is a diocese of workers," he explained. "It so happens that all the workers are Communists. Well, I guess I wouldn't say all — just about 70 or 80 per cent."

"I've tried to maintain good contacts with everybody here," he continued. "When there is a strike—and there are a great many of them—I go out into the streets and try to give a good word to everybody."

"I don't preach to them or try to convert them because they don't like this approach. I try to give them a Christian solution to the problem as I see it."

The archbishop's troubles do not end with the laity. He has considerable opposition from his own clergy. About 50 per cent of the priests of his archdiocese recently displayed opposition to many of his progressive activities regarding Church matters. The same holds true of the church-going laity.

Despite that opposition and the current Vatican probe of his activities, the archbishop continues to speak out on the issues he feels are important.

There is the matter of legalized divorce in Italy and the Vatican's stand against it.

"I believe in a complete separation

of Church and state," he said, explaining that the Catholic Church should enter into dialogue with Italian political leaders seeking legalized divorce.

On the Church-state relationships throughout the world:

"I believe the Church must have liberty. The Church must have good relations with the state. And formal treaties between the Church and states are alright but both sides would be better off without such formal treaties where each side has confidence in the other."

Celibacy:

"I think the Pope has left the door open only for discussion of the possible ordination of older married men to serve in areas where there is an extreme shortage of priests."

The Catholic Church in America and its efforts to help the needy:

"The Catholic Church in America does a lot for the needy but it could do more. American society lives by giving alms. You give a lot of alms over the world. But you don't have a definite plan and method. The poverty work should be more thought out and the detailed plans should be made known to everyone who is expected to donate towards the effort."

The persistent reports that Pope Paul is a prisoner of ultra-conservative Vatican bishops and cardinals:

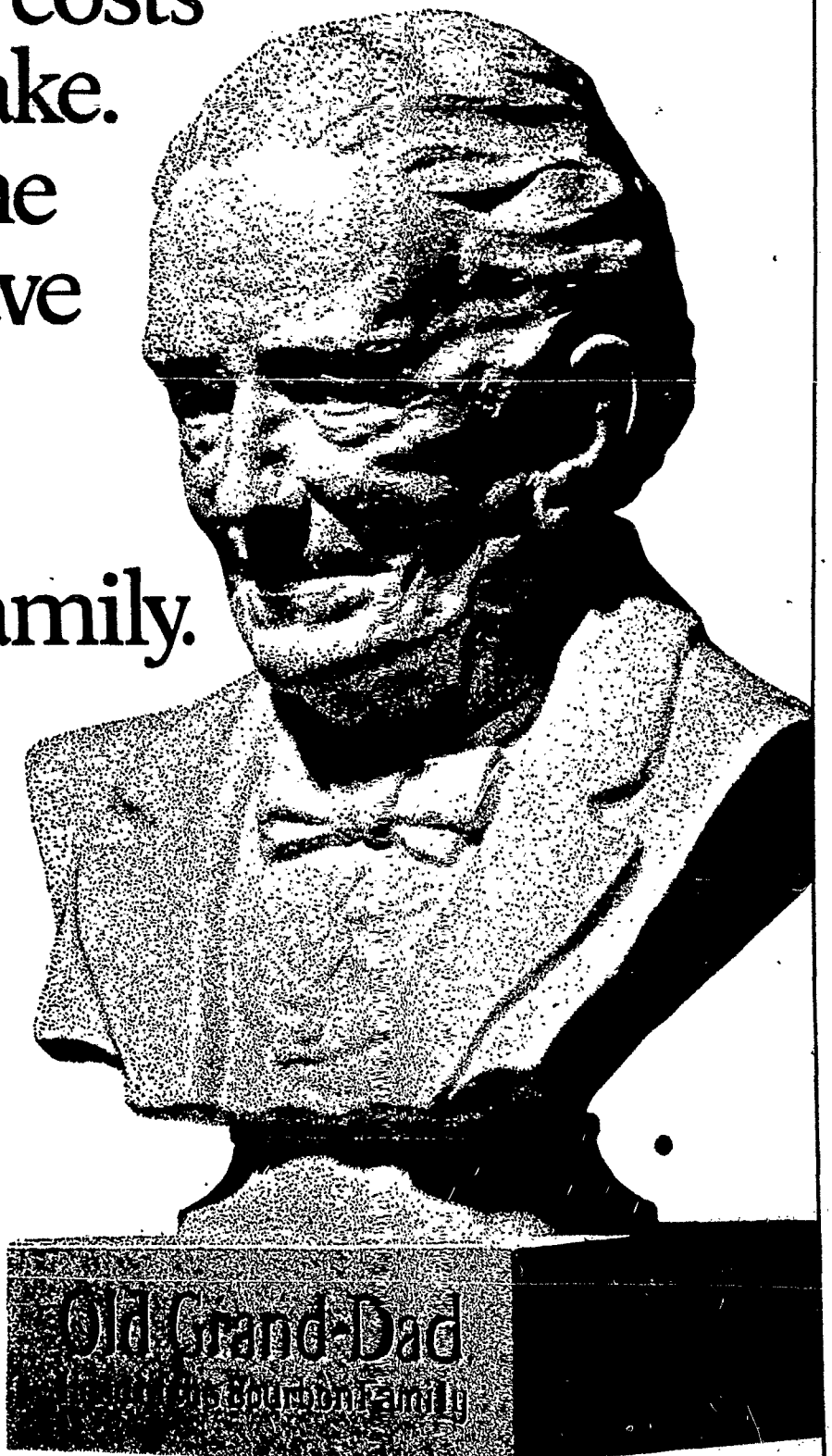
"People have been saying this for 2,000 years but I must say I don't know if it is true."

The nine priests who made an open declaration against mandatory celibacy:

"They merely answered one of the many questions sent them in a routine questionnaire on their feelings. But these nine answered the question in a very special way."

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