

Hindu Mass Has Unusual Rites

Suva, Fiji — The Missa Puja—mass in Hindi using traditional Indian forms of worship — has aroused widespread interest among the Indians of Fiji, Hindu as well as Catholic.

So far in this island nation, where slightly more than half the population of 500,000 is Indian, no controversy has erupted over the new liturgy as did recently in India itself. There Archbishop Lawrence T. Pichay, S. J., of Calcutta ordered a "consultation" with the faithful after the Catholic Association of Bengal protested that the Mass is being "Hinduized" rather than "Indianized."

Father John Reilly, SJ, developed this new approach. A veteran missionary from India, Father Reilly celebrated the Missa Puja, as it is known, in Fiji.

It is his contention that "the Christian Indian has been ostracized by his own people, who accuse him of rejecting the culture of his birth because he adopted Western ways in his worship".

"The Indian has a far greater sense of symbolism than the Westerner," says Father Reilly. "He uses material signs and gestures naturally to express his worship of God. He finds it almost impossible to approach God without them."

In the Missa Puja, the music is traditionally Indian. The celebrant and the other participants in the ceremony are barefooted, because it is the Indian custom to remove one's shoes before entering a sacred place.

A brass Indian tray is used to bring the bread and wine to the altar. The offertory procession (see picture) also, includes members of the congregation bringing flowers, lights,

incense, and camphor — all used traditionally by the Indians in the worship of their gods.

As he receives each of them; the priest offers an arati — a reverential gesture in which he brings the gift to his bowed forehead, and then traces several circles in the air with it. In a real sense, an arati is a form of prayer with one's hands.

The celebrant and other participants also repeatedly use the traditional Indian greeting of namaste by bringing together the joined hands and bowing the head. The deeper the respect to be shown, the higher the hands are raised.

Indian Catholics in Fiji are also overjoyed that the Church now encourages them to celebrate some Indian festivals in

a Christian way. One is Diwali, the festival of lights. Indian oil lamps are displayed around the home, and friends are invited to share the bounty of the table.

Another Indian feast, Rakhandhan, emphasizes the value of love within the family between brothers and sisters. During the day, the brother wears an armband he receives from his sister, signifying his brotherly love for her and his promise to protect her until she marries.



A young Indian girl brings kapoor (camphor) to Mass

COURIER / WORLD

Dom Helder Urged for Nobel

Brussels—(RNS)—Another voice has been added to the mounting chorus of endorsements of Brazil's Archbishop Helder Camara for the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize.

The latest nominator is the Belgian Bishops' Conference. Its president, Leo Josef Cardinal Suenens, has sent the following telegram to the Nobel Institute in Oslo:

"The Belgian Episcopal Conference warmly supports the candidacy of Archbishop Helder Pessoa Camara of Olinde and Recife for the Nobel Peace Prize for 1970."

In July, the Lutheran World Federation's Fifth Assembly voted to endorse the Brazilian prelate's nomination. Earlier endorsements have come from the West German Conference of Catholic Youth; the Netherlands Reformed Church; the editors of Christian Century, an ecumenical weekly published in Chicago; the South American Christian Trade Union; the Italian Catholic Workers Association; and various individuals, including three Protestant members of the Swedish parliament.

Basques Await Secret Trial

Madrid — (RNS) — Fourteen alleged leaders of the Basque Liberation Movement, including two Roman Catholic priests, will be tried by secret court martial at Burgos in October. The defendants were arrested in 1969 under the Banditry and Terrorism Act which was re-introduced in the troubled Basque provinces of Northern Spain two years ago.

Centuries ago the Basques submitted to the Spanish crown on the condition that their local rights would be respected, but historians say those rights have been whittled away since the 1830s. Resistance groups have engaged in sabotage and occasional violence, but the government maintains tight control.

In November 1969, Bishop Jose M. Cirada of Santander and Bishop Jacinto Argaya of San Sebastian issued a strongly-worded joint pastoral condemning the "harshness of the government's repressive measures" against the Basque Liberation Movement.

Nigerian Bishop Installed

Calabar, Nigeria — (NC) — U.S.-educated Bishop Brian Davis Usanga, 42, was installed here Aug. 30 as the first Nigerian bishop of Calabar, in the former Republic of Biafra.

Bishop Usanga succeeds Irish-born Bishop James Moynagh, S.P.S., who headed the diocese for 23 years until his resignation in May, 1970. Bishop Usanga had served as auxiliary to Bishop Moynagh since 1966.

Bishop Usanga was on the dean's honor roll in 1961 when he was graduated from St. Mary's of the Plains College, Dodge City, Kans. He obtained his master of arts degree in 1963 at St. Louis University and was working on his doctorate in philosophy at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., when he was appointed auxiliary bishop of Calabar.

Courier-Journal

Consecration Of Virgins Rite Revised

Vatican City — (RNS) —The Vatican this week introduced a revised rite for "the consecration of virgins" that will enable a woman to commit herself publicly and solemnly to a life of celibate chastity, while remaining in secular society.

The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, which formulate the rite, said in a statement that the ceremony was "a mark of esteem for women, whose dignity is sometimes offended in our society, which is often dominated by vulgar hedonism."

The "Christian virgin" — as the woman will be known, — will not be required to live in a convent or other community with like-minded women. She will be expected, however, to assist in missionary endeavors according to her aptitude and abilities.

The ritual profession of celibacy, customary in the early Christian Church, was the subject of frequent Church legislation over the years, that last in 1596, but had fallen into disuse.

But the Church, as recently as the Second Vatican Council, expressed its traditional esteem for the life of consecrated virginity. In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Council said: "Total continence embraced on behalf of the kingdom of heaven has always been held in particular honor by the Church as being a sign of charity and stimulus toward it, as well as a unique fountain of spiritual fertility in the world."

According to the directive of the Vatican congregation that is concerned with liturgy and ceremonies, the consecration of a Christian virgin must be authorized by her bishop and requires his ministry.

Wednesday, September 16, 1970

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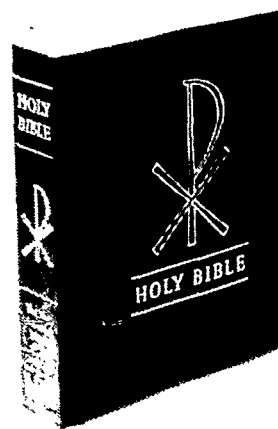
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