

Community of Followers

By Margaret Joynt

We all have occasion to visit a parish other than our own now and then. It is surprising how often this experience can refresh the spirit and provide new answers to the question, "What is a Christian community?" In this way the lay person becomes aware of the ways in which community spirit is generated and fostered within a gathering for Mass.

To experience a sense of community at Mass, one can meditate on the Last Supper and on the warmth and friendliness among those men who had been drawn close to each other by hours with their Lord; one can think about the Stranger whom the apostles meet on the way to Emmaus, and how their eyes and intellects were opened when he broke bread with them.

To experience community, visit or have the privilege of belonging to a parish in a small town where every parishioner knows every other, and where they all rejoice when a child is baptized, and all are saddened at the death of a young mother.

To experience community, attend Mass at St. Bernard's Seminary or Becket Hall and realize how the friendship of the members of those communities with Christ and with each other enfold a visitor as well.

To experience community, watch the many smiles when a 2-year-old in the spirit of the Kiss of Peace shakes the hands of 10 adult strangers who are too shy to do the same.

To experience community, attend Mass in a large urban parish (yes, it is possible) where the voices of all are raised in songs of joy, and whose people have smiles for all they know and for all whom they would like to know.

To experience community, attend a Protestant service at which five strangers approach you to shake your hand and welcome you to their congregation.

Frank Morriss in a column in the *Courier-Journal* last summer suggested that emphasis on the community aspect of the Mass, that of gathering together for the Lord's Supper, is unnecessary, and that we should concentrate on social submission to God through sacrifice. It seems to me that both points of emphasis can exist side by side. Belief in the Divine Substance of the Eucharist is not diminished but is enhanced by the sense of belonging to a Christian community.

Not every visit to another parish gives rise to an increased sense of community. Most of us have been unfortunate enough to have experienced also the cold, "look-neither-this-way-nor-that" setting for the Mass. For me this is rather like walking into a family gathering where there is an icy silence rather than laughter and love.

How would Jesus like His commemoration to be? The answer is obvious.



Gabriel Richard Institute Graduates

Among some 40 graduates of nine-week once-weekly Gabriel Richard Institute courses conducted this fall are those pictured above. Courses aim to "help discover hidden talents, improve self-confidence and give new enthusiasm on life." Registration for January courses may be made by telephoning 594-9604, Rochester. In photo from left are: seated — Mrs. James Staub, St. James Parish; Mrs. Ruth Trabert, St. Joseph's, Penfield; Mrs. Noella Schum, St. James; Mrs. Dorothy Way, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church; Miss Eileen Flanagan, St. James; Miss Anita D'Andrea, Blessed Sacrament; standing — Mrs. Lee Skerrett, St. James; Ben Cometa, St. John the Evangelist's, Rochester; Mrs. Ellen Maurer, St. James; George Wolanski, St. John the Evangelist's; Miss Elaine Popatello; Gary Siebert and Miss Sharon Siebert, St. James.

More Letters

Candidate Grateful

Editor:

Now that the election is over and sufficient time has elapsed to allow exhilaration or depression (depending on one's relative position) to wane, I would appreciate the opportunity to publicly express my appreciation, gratitude and just plain "thanks" to the *Courier-Journal* and all your readers for the fair and impartial consideration given my candidacy for U.S. Congress in the 34th Congressional District.

Although we were not successful in a political sense, my family and I feel that our efforts were well rewarded in the warm friendships we made, our participation in the democratic process, and in coming to know and appreciate the accomplishments, the problems, and the beauty of the 34th Congressional District and its people.

Neal P. McCurn
Syracuse

Mission Needs Rosaries

Editor:

I am a Catholic secular missionary priest working in the far-off land of India. My mission consists of 1,500 acres of land, with a population of 10,000 Catholics. They claim to be Catholics from the time of St. Thomas the Apostle. They are strong in faith but poor in worldly goods.

There are two churches, one chapel, three schools and one convent. There are many boys and girls here.

Rosaries, crucifixes, medals and other religious articles could attract them in numbers to catechism classes and other duties. I would ask *Courier-Journal* readers to send me such religious articles as they can spare. In return I shall pray for them during my daily Mass.

Father L. Abraham Joseph
St. Michael's Church
Kumbalam P.O., via Mulavaya
Quilon District, South India

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