

The Crisis of Authority: Part One

Since becoming bishop, I have had two occasions to speak to those who are responsible for law and order and for the administration of justice in our Rochester society. Both speeches provoked protests and demonstrations from those who claim inequities promoted by our courts and brutality by our police.

I would like to clarify my position in this column. The first occasion was last September when I celebrated the annual Red Mass at St. Joseph's Church in downtown Rochester. It marked the 26th year that this Mass has been celebrated in the diocese — following a tradition going back to the XIII Century in the history of the Church in which lawyers and judges began to make a public declaration of their dependence on God and beg the special assistance of the Holy Spirit for the particular needs of their profession before the Fall opening of the courts of justice.

Guest Columnist

Today's Church Music: Darkness into Light

Dedicated church musicians today are going through a dark night of the senses (at least of the sense of hearing), and many of them even through a dark night of the soul. Church music seems to be in a state of utter collapse. Years of work have gone bankrupt, and hardly anyone seems to care.

But crisis means judgment, not panic. Church music is facing a judgment, and church musicians must face up to that judgment if they hope to influence the course of the future.

Music in church must no longer be a performance, but a function, — no longer an exclusive preserve of the choirs, but a choral partnership with the worshipping congregations. It is no longer wedded to Gregorian chant, because the liturgy is no longer wedded to the Latin language for which the chant was composed. Many hymns of the past are alien in text and music to the "now" generation.

Filling this sudden vacuum are hundreds

of "pop" singers, front and center, unprofessional and often mediocre players, with a bag of trivial songs that run round and round the mulberry bush, hurraing for love, unity, tables, eating and drinking, brothers and sisters, etc. — all fine ideas, but devoid of the magical words that could kindle them into poetry.

These eager minstrels now dominate the scene. They are prevailing so loudly and gleefully that the prospects of a renaissance of church music seem very remote. And remote they will continue to be, as long as the pastors remain bogged down in apathy or contentment with the prevalent chaos.

So, where do we turn on the lights? First, church budgets must give a high priority to professionally competent organists and choral musicians. The woods are full of them. They just need to be found, and offered good liturgical training and a worthy salary.

Then, composers must be inspired, even invited, to write new works for the church, which will give choirs and people a music in the contemporary idiom. Some of them are already producing such music. Their work maps out the road toward the future.

it is to this rational order of truth and justice that the Declaration of Independence refers when it says "We hold these truths to be self-evident".

"You belong to a profession represented by men who prefer to say that law is nothing more than sanctified social custom and that it has no more validity than that which society from time to time wishes to confer upon it.

"You are associated with men who treat the practice of law as a game with an amoral set of rules — similar in many ways to those of charity and justice but not subject to them — or as a sort of civilized trial by combat in which the decision depends upon cleverness and the glib tongue — rather than on the merits of the case.

"You are associated with men who have forgotten the dignity of their profession — who are satisfied with merely 'handling a case' — whose clients mean no more to them than a case number — who do not hesitate to twist facts to suit their own ambition."

Then I urged them: "Against these dangers join your voices in the prayer today, 'O Lord, deliver us.'"

By Father Benedict Ehmann

The worship committees of all the parishes must be aligned with the diocesan liturgy and music commissions, so that, by action and interaction, the input into the parish liturgies may be improved and refined, and all may be kept in touch with contemporary developments and get out of the rut of clichés and trivia.

The rank-and-file directors of parish music must be given good opportunities for ongoing education. They must be helped to raise their sights and set their goals for quality performance. This is the aim of the workshop which the Rochester Diocesan Music Commission on Church Music is arranging for the week of June 21 at Nazareth College. This will bring a large faculty to serve our liturgy and music people in the areas of choral reading and conducting, organ and guitar playing, folk music, and even the dance as serving the liturgy. Eminent among them will be Father Lucien Deiss, C.Sp., who is famous for his new musical settings for the psalms in worship.

The lights are going on. With these hopeful prospects the dark night of our contemporary church musicians will give way to a gracious day, a new era, — even a golden age.

Editorial

New Weapon for Social Progress . . . the Scalpel

Among the more subtle, but nonetheless real dangers of the present spate of dehumanizing laws and proposals is that once manipulation of the race is made socially acceptable the next step is to make it work more efficiently for those pulling the strings.

Much of society has come to see abortion as a channel to follow in solving some of our social problems. Ominously, it is safe to say that such an adjustment makes it easier to accept the next step — probably euthanasia.

Euthanasia, but only on a voluntary basis, its proponents say. It is like the old gambit of salesmen — get 'em nibbling, then give 'em the hook.

A new example of the kind of manipulation coming about is being discussed in the Illinois House. A member has proposed a bill requiring welfare recipients to undergo sterilization after their second child in order to remain eligible for public aid. The bill also offered a \$100 "reward" to persons having sterilization operations. Such deals are aimed specifically at the impoverished, those who need \$100 badly enough to submit to sterilization.

Even those able to accept such things as abortion, required sterilization and euthanasia as social remedies should be able to see the frightening potential looming ahead.

This is a world breeding class struggles,

where antagonism is rife between rich and poor, big nation and emerging nation, between black and white, between minorities and bigots, even between generations.

Bloody war continues, assassinations take place regularly and are considered a proper political or social ploy even in highly civilized nations.

What is the key? Power. Those that have it want to keep it; those that have none, want their share. There are men who would do anything for it.

Think of the weapons this society has brought us. The folks who have brought you the hydrogen bomb and napalm now bring you the sterile, sharp edge of the surgeon's scalpel for your use.