

# Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons

"What can we do to put new life into our liturgy committee?" asks a reader from a New York diocese.

"When we first started, there were a number of dramatic changes and the role of lector was new. We had a great deal of interest in our work and most members of the committee turned out to the monthly meetings.

"Now, we seem to be drifting. The meetings seem to repeat themselves and cover a few boring details."

Motivation and vision are most important. The liturgy committee is central to the parish. The parish is nothing if it is not a worshipping community.

My first suggestion would be that the name of the Committee be changed to worship committee. "Liturgy," in many people's minds, has to do with rubrics and rituals. This, in their minds, again, has to do with the priest's role and really doesn't concern them except as "spectators."

Similarly, if we are going to use English in our worship services, why not use it in our descriptions, rather than the more Latinized and unfamiliar words?

(Liturgy is the rite of the Eucharist, but did you know that it not only stems from the late Latin "liturgis," but from the Greek "leitourgia," meaning public service or the service of the priest? The stem "leit" is a variant of "laos," meaning people or multitude.)

To get the motivation and the vision of what is possible through worship, the Committee

## Special Unit

### Aids Newborn

Rochester General Hospital is completing a \$100,000 intensive care unit that is expected to give newborn babies in the region a better chance of surviving premature birth and life-threatening disorders.

The unit is under the supervision of Dr. Arthur Kopelman, a specialist in the treatment of newborn babies. Residents in pediatrics at Rochester General and the University of Rochester School of Medicine will staff the unit.

Rochester General Hospital is the state-designated regional center for premature babies for the 10-county Greater Rochester area, where about 1500 premature births occur each year. The region comprises Monroe, Orleans, Livingston, Wayne, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Steuben, and Chemung counties.

### Retreat Slated For Alcoholics

On the weekend of June 9-11, there will be a closed retreat-seminar at Notre Dame Retreat House for alcoholics. The program will start at 8 p.m. Friday and close with lunch Sunday at noon.

Father William Collins, CSSR, from New York City, will conduct the program. Father Collins is an active member of the AA and conducts retreats for alcoholics throughout the country.

This retreat is open to men and women of all faiths — alcoholics only. Reservations can be made by calling the Retreat House.

should study the Vatican II documents, especially the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

I would also recommend that since the spirit of liturgical renewal is to emphasize the centrality of Christ in the life of the Church, that every committee member have and use a good life of Christ.

Also, the committee should ask the priests to talk with them about Christ. An afternoon of recollection devoted to seeing Christ speak and act in the Gospels is more important than deciding on a Mass schedule.

Additional help in motivation and vision can be gotten from your diocesan office for worship and by visits with other worship committees in nearby parishes.

There are several other resources, too, which you may wish to investigate.

A practical handbook for the worship committee would be Rev. Michael Gilligan's How To Prepare Mass. This brief paperback was written not only from an excellent background in history and Church teaching, but from the actual experiences of several liturgy commissions. It is available from American Catholic Press, 1223 Rossell Ave., Oak Park, Ill. 60302.

The Department of Worship of the Archdiocese of Detroit has an attractive correspondence course in worship. You can get more information by writing to Father Patrick Cooney, Dept. of Worship, Archdiocese of Detroit, 305 Michigan Ave. Detroit, Mich. 48226.

This last source also publishes a lively monthly newsletter, "Lector," and you might ask to see a copy when you write about the course.

## 'One Parish'

# Confessional Room Replaces 'Box'

(Catholic Press Features)  
In one parish, the traditional confessional booth has been replaced, during a church renovation, with a "confessional room," with a chair instead of a kneeler.

In the confessional room, both penitent and priest can speak in a normal voice, without the whispering common in the old-style confessional. Also, the room is lighted, so there is no danger of stumbling, but the penitent and the priest are positioned in such a way that the priest can be seen by the penitent but he cannot be seen by the priest, unless he wishes to be seen.

When the parish renovation was being planned, the pastor and the parish council, looking ahead to the future, took note of a commentary on Penance in the February, 1969, issue of the Newsletter of the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy, which said:

"Some Catholics are increasingly dissatisfied with themselves and the quality of their experience in receiving the sacrament of penance.

"The persons who seek to gain more from confession are not always those who favor a swifter implementation of Vatican II or a faster pace in the renewal of the liturgy.

"They are sometimes people of a deep, traditional piety who wish to go beyond a general recitation of often-repeated lesser sins. With the help of a priest they wish to probe the roots of their own sinfulness in order to better open themselves to the mercy of the Lord.

"Yet their experience of the conventional confession booth is forbidding and frustrates their desire to be helped by a candid dialogue with the priest, because of the semi-darkness, because of the total visual separation of priest and penitent, and because kneeling is the only possible posture.

"In order to make it possible for people to receive more fruitfully the sacrament of penance,

small rooms, rather than confessionals, are preferable.

"Such a room for only one penitent at a time emphasizes the personal aspect of the sacrament. It promotes a realistic privacy in which priest and penitent can speak normally, without having to use a secretive voice, or worse, to whisper.

"It provides the penitent an informal setting and an opportunity to converse face-to-face with the priest in the course of confession.

"This room should also be designed so that those penitents who desire to remain anonymous are not seen by the priest; thus, every penitent would always have the option of confessing without being known.

"A confessional room provides a chair for the penitent, and makes a pleasant natural setting for confession.

"If a parish chooses a conven-

tional confessional in place of a confessional room, it should provide not only adequate light, heat and ventilation but should be generous in size, to allow freedom of movement and to leave open the possibility of change in our general thinking about the manner of confessing sins."

Before the new confessional room was installed, the reasons for it were explained at all the Masses one weekend, and comments were invited from the parishioners. Not one negative vote was expressed.

When a visiting priest recently heard the confessions of some elderly parishioners, in Polish, he was told by the penitents that for the first time in their life they felt comfortable going to confession.

The confessional room also contains a kneeler and screen for use by penitents preferring the traditional method of confession.



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