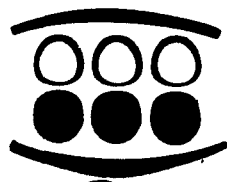


# Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons



Good music in the liturgy is no accident. Planning must be done, if we are to join the Psalmist when he sings, "All you peoples, clap your hands, shout to God with cries of gladness..."

When Bishop James W. Malone addressed the convention of the National Catholic Music Educators Association, he strongly recommended that every parish hire a lay minister of music.

He also said there must be a planning team, whatever its name (e.g., liturgy committee, worship commission), in every parish.

He then gave four points for effective planning for such a group.

"Coordination is of paramount importance," he said, "but in addition, planning must also be varied, resourceful and respectful."

The priest, organist, commentator and song leader must talk together before the Mass.

"A degree from Juilliard is not necessary to realize a hymn is being played in a key higher than the song leader's baritone capability or to determine that the substitute organist lacks a sense of rhythm and unwittingly plans a hymn accompaniment at a tempo which perplexes the congregation, instead of leading and supporting," Bishop Malone explained.

There is also a need to coordinate the selection of music with the Mass texts and readings. "To play a Marian hymn at Holy Communion or a Lenten lament after Easter is both an annoyance and a distraction," the bishop said.

## Mission Helpers' Group Enlarged

Mrs. Eldora Scott of Holcomb, international director of the Hands of Mary mission helpers' group, announced this week that the organization had been enlarged by the appointment of Mrs. Cathy Johnson of Arlington, Tex., as western regional director.

The Hands of Mary is affiliated with the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima. Father Vincent LeFrois, pastor of St. Michael's, Livonia Center, is spiritual advisor. Regional directors include Mrs. Mary Whipple of Marietta, N.Y., and Mary Berenyi of Akron, O.

"How do you plan music for Mass and appeal simultaneously to a congregation composed of teenagers who dig 'Godspell,' their parents who prefer 'Good Night, Sweet Jesus,' and their grandparents, who are hung up on Gregorian Chant?"

You can't eliminate the polarization in the musical field, Bishop Malone admitted. But all varieties of music can be played.

At certain times, specific types of music might be played for small, homogeneous groups (e.g., home Masses) and at other times we must sacrifice our personal tastes.

Bishop Malone said there is no longer any excuse for music monotony. There are at least 16 places in the Mass where there may be singing, and the options and variations are countless.

With apologies to the organists and guitarists, Bishop Malone said there is room for all types of instruments in church, "with the possible exception of the kazoo."

"The ingenious music director can devise a variety of combinations — congregation, choir and instruments — to enhance the rendition of a musical selection. It can be an inspiration and bring us closer to God — and that is precisely what worship is all about."

To illustrate the need for sensitivity to the feelings of others, Bishop Malone told of a priest who arranged an early morning weekday Mass for a special group.

The Mass was planned with many liturgical embellishments, including spontaneous petitions from the congregation, Communion under both species, and with the small group gathered around the altar singing folk songs with guitar.

Because of an oversight, the type of Mass was not announced in the parish bulletin. Just before Mass was to begin, the group was joined by several elderly parishioners.

The priest delayed the beginning of Mass while he went to the pews and explained the type of liturgy about to take place.

"Had he lacked sensitivity," Bishop Malone explained, "the people may have walked out hurt and shocked. They stayed. They tolerated what did not appeal to them personally. The priest was respectful of their divergent tastes."

## Sisters Press Equal Rights

Milwaukee, Wis. (RNS) — A statement supporting equal rights for women, including ordination for the priesthood or other sacramental function, has been approved by the General Legislative Assembly of the School Sisters of St. Francis.

"We urge the removal of all present discriminatory laws, regulations and practices in order to bring women into equal status with men in the Church," the proposal said.

"In particular, we support the right of women who so desire, and who are suitable candidates, to be ordained to sacramental ministry in the Church."

The statement said that the present lack of equality for women in the Church resulted from cultural and social factors. It said that "baptism, by incorporating human beings, both men and women, in Christ, constitutes them without any distinction 'persons' in Christ."

The legislative assembly is the highest governing body of the community with 33 nuns representing nine provinces in the United States, Central America and Europe. The proposal was offered at the Sisters' convention, which was held at Alverno College and was attended by some 800 nuns from the mid-west.

Copies of the statement will be sent to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington and to Rome.

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