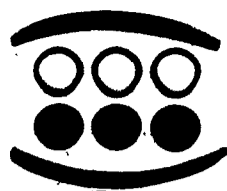


Our Parish COUNCIL

by Bernard Lyons



After you are finished complaining about the apathy of the parishioners toward full participation in the Mass, what is there to do about the worship void?

"The sad truth is that many Catholics are not participating in the Mass to the degree we had anticipated," Bishop James W. Malone of Youngstown, O., told the National Catholic Music Educators Association at their convention. "They are engaged in a type of passive resistance. They are suffering from a worship void."

Bishop Malone said it wasn't quite fair to blame the lukewarm participation on the congregation alone, however.

"In my Sunday visits to various parishes, I cannot help but notice that when the walls of a church get dirty, the pastor or parish council promptly arranges a paint job. Visual dullness is intolerable to everyone.

"And yet," he continued, "though the walls are sharp, the music is sometimes flat. Lackluster, dull liturgical music in too many parishes is allowed to continue Sunday after Sunday. We are much too tolerant of bad liturgical music indifferently performed, and I suspect it is because sound is fleeting — what we hear, we soon forget."

Proper celebration of the liturgy makes demands on the parish, Bishop Malone said.

Though there are many requirements, Bishop Malone emphasized two — trained personnel and adequate planning.

"These are inter-dependent and indispensable — without one, we cannot have the other," he said. Because intelligent planning and follow-through demand trained personnel, Bishop Malone strongly recommended that every parish have a lay minister of music.

"I am in favor of degreed music teachers working in our Catholic schools, of course, but we must go beyond that. We must lead adults, as well as children, to the realization that music is a catalyst which enables the parish to jell as a community," he said.

Bishop Malone acknowledged that there would be objections, "even though the past experience of our Protestant brothers demonstrates its feasibility and effectiveness." He thought the chief objection would center on the parish pocketbook.

"And yet, almost routinely," he answered, "the parish council or pastor approves the hiring of a teacher for the benefit of 30 or 40 children. I favor this, of course, but it seems to me that large parishes, at least, should be willing to spend a similar amount for a full-time lay minister of music whose work can inject new vitality into the spiritual life of the entire parish. In smaller parishes, the position could be filled on a part-time basis."

The lay minister of music's job need not be restricted to the Sunday Masses only, according to Bishop Malone. "While each

Mass may not employ the same musical resources, good liturgical music should be the aim for every Mass. Moreover, the recently restored rituals for the communal celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Anointing and Penance all call for music. Music is also playing an increasingly important role in ecumenical and para-liturgical services."

In addition to the hired professional, Bishop Malone emphasized that there must be a working liturgical committee or a music committee, depending upon the size of the parish. "Our goal is for the community of believers to sing a joyful song to the Lord. Religious writers throughout the centuries have described joy as the splendid secret of the Christian life. Let us work together," Bishop Malone concluded, "to bare that secret to an incredulous and searching society."

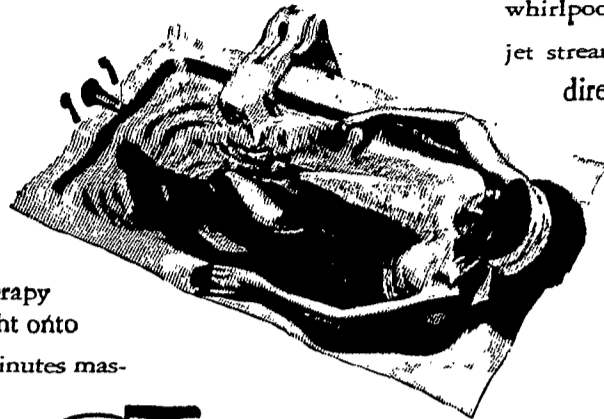
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SMOKING CLINICS

Smoking withdrawal clinics will be held monthly, beginning with Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 12 and 13 at 7:30 p.m., at the Al Sigl Center. Sponsors are the Monroe County Cancer and Leukemia Association, and the Red Feather Agency for cancer control. Dr. John J. Della Porta, health education consultant, will conduct the clinics.