

## Aborigine Mass OKed for Congress

Melbourne (RNS) — What may be the strangest liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church has been approved by the Vatican for Australia's aborigines and it will be publicly initiated during the 40th International Eucharistic Congress here.

One of its features is the substitution of a ritual dance for the spoken Word of God as read from a book, according to Father Hilton Deakin, a Melbourne priest. A specialist in anthropology, he was commissioned to work on the aboriginal Mass.

The new liturgy is based on something Pope Paul emphasized during a 1970 visit to Sydney, that the preservation of aboriginal culture is important.

The aboriginal liturgy will be held at the Sidney Meyer Music Bowl on Feb. 24 as part of the

Congress. However, some missionary priests have already experimented with it, using unique forms of aboriginal culture.

In describing ways in which the aboriginal culture was adapted, Father Deakin noted that the second Eucharistic prayer of the Mass was translated into one aboriginal dialect and various aboriginal rituals have been incorporated into other Eucharistic prayers.

"Western and Hebraic culture forms in the Eucharist with which we are familiar have always proved a difficulty in other cultural surroundings," he said. "Within the aboriginal society a more radical approach was needed."

Father Deakin pointed out that a complex series of cultural pat-

terns covers the aboriginal groups throughout Australia. Signs and symbols used in these cultures are varied and what is a symbol in one area may be contradictory in another area.

"Similarly, there is a complexity of dialects and an absence of a common linguistic substratum," the priest observed. "Hence, the Congress uses English throughout, although the thought patterns are aboriginal."

Noting the substitution of the ritual dance for a reading, Father Deakin said that in traditional societies, the dance reached the heights of cultural and artistic expression.

"The aboriginal 'coroboree' (ritual dance) may be sacred or non-sacred; it may relate to events of a dream or it may describe recent secular functions. It may involve men and women or be exclusive to one sex," the priest explained.

He added that it was in dance, song and words spoken in secret ceremonies that aboriginal traditions were handed down from one generation to another.

The aborigines include 24 dancers from missions conducted by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Bathurst Island. Under the direction of Father Michael Sims, they will dance the Last Supper story, which will serve as an equivalent of the first Scripture reading of the Mass.

Describing the occasion when he first celebrated this liturgy among the aborigines, Father Morrison said: "All the people came and joined in. It was a real meeting of God's people, offering worship in a very solemn and inspiring manner."

He said the responsorial psalm is being replaced in the liturgy by a traditional sing-song of Claude Narjic, the leading Port Keats song man, and a song of praise honoring Christ is sung in the Murinyngar dialect. The psalm ends with the whole congregation dancing and singing.

## Cardinal Urges Participation In Congress

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — Cardinal Lawrence Shehan of Baltimore, papal legate to the 40th International Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne, Feb. 18-25, urged Catholics around the world to "share in the spiritual riches" of the event.

In letters to presidents of all Catholic bishops' conferences, he urged all prelates to encourage their priests to make a particular mention of the Australian Congress in their homilies on Feb. 25 and make appropriate petitions during the liturgies that day.

The cardinal, who is chairman of the Permanent Commission on Eucharistic Congresses, will be one of several U.S. prelates attending the Melbourne observance. He urged Catholics worldwide to celebrate the Eucharist with those in Melbourne in a public manifestation of faith.

A Eucharistic Congress is a large assembly of clergy, religious and laity held for the purpose of deepening devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The last Congress was held in 1968 at Bogota, Colombia, and was attended by Pope Paul.

### DEADLINE

The Courier-Journal welcomes news of your club or organization. A deadline of Thursday noon preceding publication must be observed.

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Beneath tall palms on Bathurst Island, a Missionaries of the Sacred Heart priest says prayers with aborigine fishermen and their families. Bathurst Island, 50 miles north of Darwin, the capital of Australia's Northern Territory, is today the home of some 850 aborigines. (RNS).

## Commonweal Criticizes High Court on Abortion

New York (RNS) — The U. S. Supreme Court's majority ruling on abortion has "diminished the whole concept of what it means to be a person," Commonweal, the weekly magazine published by Catholic laymen, said here in an editorial.

And, the editorial added, the high Court "has succumbed to that cultural elitism that marks cultures' content and their value while slipping into decline."

Commonweal, however, finds the "official" Roman Catholic Church response "an embarrassment — episcopal fulminations and full-page dead-fetus pictures in the diocesan press, plus a reminder from Cardinal Terence Cooke that 'judicial decisions are not necessarily sound moral decisions.'"

The court ruling, according to

Commonweal, is a fair measure "of the growing secularization of American society and of the political impotence of the American Catholic Church."

"What a society values," said the editorial, "it protects with laws. In that sense civil rights, minimum wage and welfare bills have a moral dimension in that they witness to the national community's concern for every member; and state laws restricting abortion at least testified to some consensus that life in process is life and must be protected."

"Now, says the Court, that consensus is gone."

Commonweal expressed hope that the continuing debate on abortion will not be perpetuated on the level of "women's exclusive right-to-decide vs. 'It's murder.'"

## Mother of War Victim Asks Mercy for Exiles

New York (RNS) — A mother whose oldest son was killed in Vietnam four years ago called here for "mercy" for what she described as 100,000 other "victims," the number of young men she said went into exile to escape military induction.

Mrs. Robert Ransom of Bronxville, spoke at a press conference called by Safe Return, an American committee which has links with draft resisters in Canada and Sweden. Also present was Episcopal Bishop Paul Moore Jr. of New York.

The committee announced a meeting of "draft exiles" and supporters in Paris Feb. 19-22. Strategies will be laid for attempts to win amnesty for war resisters.

Mrs. Ransom, the wife of an attorney and the mother of six sons, said, "Everybody says it dishonors the dead to give amnesty. A lot of people cannot presume to speak for the dead.

But I presume to speak for the dead. And I believe that it will dishonor the dead if we discredit these other victims of the Vietnam war."

Her oldest son, Mark, died in Vietnam on May 11, 1968. The mother said she had no problem supporting amnesty because her dead son was "totally against the war before going over there."

Bishop Moore and Mrs. Ransom expressed dismay over President Nixon's recent statements opposing amnesty. All speakers at the conference raised questions about the President's statement that he could not forgive the "hundreds of men who had resisted the draft."

Mrs. Ransom said, "I can't understand why he lies like that. He must know there are thousands of exiles. He just doesn't want Americans to come to grips with the seriousness of the problem."

BOB CONSIDINE

## On the Line



"There are no atheists in foxholes" it was said in World War II.

Nor behind wire in the prison camps of North Vietnam and those the Viet Cong operated inside South Vietnam. The religious fervor that has marked the beginning of an expected flood of statements by POWs thus far released would so indicate. One returned was quoted as saying, "I could never have borne this except that I was able to look up at the sky and talk to Jesus Christ."

The men who were held by the VC will have particularly graphic stories to tell, if they ever get around to talking about them. They were unique in that they were subjected to repeated attacks — from the ground as well as the air — during their period of incarceration. The attacks came from, of course, fellow Americans.

They must have lived a hairier life than even their more numerous counterparts to the North. The VC, by the very nature of their guerrilla type of hit-and-run war, had to be constantly on the move. And they moved their prisoners with them, along with their field hospitals, rice, ammunition, guns, trucks, what-not.

The miracle of the survival of these particular POWs portends eventual trouble for the Saigon government's numerically superior forces — indeed, the Saigon government itself. It reveals what the Pentagon, CIA and other agencies in South Vietnam have always been reluctant to illuminate: that for all the men, might, muscle and machinery we poured into South Vietnam, great portions of the little country remained in the hands of the indigenous enemy.

Pacification was never pacifying. The VC infrastructure obviously remained largely unscathed. Its leaders ruled large sections of the land into which South Vietnamese, U.S. and tough South Korean forces either feared to tread or felt it to be the better part of valor not to. The VC collected taxes in the way of piastres or provisions just like any recognized government. It had its own underground of well-camouflaged hospitals, supply blackmail and selective service, dumps, and means of extortion. Courier-Journal

blackmail and selective service.

For some time during the war it was paid by American and British oil companies to lay off their oil trucks as the trucks tooled down roads a heavily armed company would hesitate to move on. One or two little .22's, shot from the surrounding jungle, could have knocked off those trucks. But they moved along unscathed, thanks to the tribute paid.

Also, one of South Vietnam's largest cement plants happened to be located in VC-held territory. So the government made a deal with its foe. If the foe permitted cement trucks to move in and out of the area, certain sums would be paid. It saved the government (and the U.S.) the cost in blood and treasure that would have accrued if we had to fight to get to the cement and fight to get it out.

Saigon's top hotels and restaurants were always under VC levies. Just as in Al Capone's day in Chicago, they operated without interference as long as they paid their weekly or monthly tolls. If they didn't pay, they were bombed. Simple as that. So they paid.

The fine print of the cease-fire agreement does not rule out a continuation of this kind of double government. So it must be assumed that it will continue, until the Viet Cong and their political arm get the kind of goal they've been reaching for — the ultimate goal being control of all the rest of South Vietnam and ideological linkage with Hanoi.

The wrap-up of the war will include the use of search teams to track down what evidence can be found of what happened to the more than 1,000 men the Pentagon listed as "missing in action." The teams will scour the areas where the men were last seen, armed with interpreters and enough money to loosen tongues, if necessary.

It seems conceivable that a few who disappeared may emerge, as if from a jungle tomb. Every now and then Japanese soldiers rise out of the island vegetation and caves of World War II.

There will also be a search for correspondents who disappeared in Cambodia.

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