

# Vatican Issues Guidelines for Children's Masses

**Vatican City [RNS]** — The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship has issued a "long-awaited" and "widely-requested" document on special Mass forms for children, designating the celebration of the Eucharist as the point towards which all religious education should be directed.

The document, aimed at bringing about a "deeper encounter with God and a more intense Christian life for children," contains guidelines developed with the cooperation of men and women from all over the world trained in child psychology and in arranging celebration for children.

Among the principal elements the document stresses are shorter Masses, more participation by the children, family attendance at Mass, special sermons for children, and additional involvement in singing, music, gestures and liturgical art such as pictures or banners.

In this country, Father Thomas Krosnicki, SVD, associate director of the Secretariat of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, described the new document, entitled "Directory for Masses with Children," as going far beyond anything produced thus far — a "thorough" effort.

He said the document proposes

radical accommodations of the ordinary rite of the Mass to the mentality and spiritual growth of small children, while retaining the principal parts and structures of the Mass.

Made up of three chapters and 55 sections, the directory is intended as a supplement to the 1969 publication of the revised Roman Missal.

Citing concern for the evidence of contemporary psychology, which "has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood," the directory guidelines stress responsibility of parents, teachers, priests and others to children who cannot fully understand the teaching aspects of the adult liturgy but who should not be deprived of the opportunity of sharing in a comprehensive celebration of the Mass.

The document, approved by Pope Paul, presents general guidelines and authorizes national bishops' conferences and individual bishops to implement the practices. Bishops' conferences are also encouraged to adopt for the children special liturgical practices and gestures "in accordance with the character and usages of the different peoples."

The document issued Dec. 20, said the celebration of the Eucharist or liturgy is considered "not a starting point but the point towards which their religious education should be directed."

According to Father Krosnicki, the first chapter of the directory emphasizes that special Masses with and for children must parallel the adult celebration so that children make a gradual transition to regular Sunday Mass.

He said the other chapters deal with "accommodations" which should be made at Masses having an adult congregation and some children, and with "more basic changes" in Masses attended predominantly by children.

An overriding concern of the document, said Father Krosnicki, is "better communication with children through the liturgy which is seen as a responsibility rooted in Catholic teaching and practice."

He quoted the document as stating:

"By baptizing infants, the Church expresses its confidence in the gifts received from this sacrament, thus it must be concerned that the baptized grow in communion with Christ and

the brethren. Sharing in the Eucharist is the sign and the pledge of this very communion."

Thus, the liturgist noted, the guidelines seek to develop better Eucharistic catechesis and the liturgical elements which will appeal to young children. He observed that the document lists some of these elements: "The activity of the congregation, exchange of greetings, capacity to listen and to seek pardon, experience of symbolic actions, a meal of friendship and festive celebration."

While urging attendance of the full family unit at the Eucharist, the document stressed that children must not feel ignored or forgotten at these celebrations. To avoid this the priest ought to address them frequently and various tasks in the ceremonies be allotted to them.

In the section on special Masses for children, the document spelled out that children should perform many of the main lay functions. It was also advised that the time of such Masses be suited to the children's habits.

Elsewhere, the document assessed the role of children in singing and music, noting that "children have a natural aptitude for singing and in some countries they learn to play one of the simpler musical instruments at a very early age."

The Vatican document emphasized that in the case of children "it is most important that the celebration of the liturgy should not become a completely intellectual thing and that children should have the opportunity to express themselves with gestures."

Mentioning the visual elements of the liturgy, such as candles, banners and special decor, the document suggested that pictures made by the children be included.

After pointing out that well-directed children "can observe periods of silence" like adults, the document concluded that "everything intended to adapt the liturgy to children should be aimed at bringing about a deeper encounter with God and a more intense Christian life for the children."



Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Weicher of Penfield Road (right) welcome Mr. and Mrs. John Dennee of Scribner Road to St. Joseph's Parish. Married in 1929, the Weichers have been in the parish some 45 years. Weicher has lived in Penfield since 1899. The Dennees joined St. Joseph's Parish one month ago. Both couples look forward to the parish dinner dance on Jan. 19 at the Hospitality House which will give particular recognition to new parishioners.

## St. Joseph's Dinner Dance

The Home School Association of St. Joseph's Church, Penfield, is sponsoring a parish-wide dinner dance Saturday, Jan. 19 at the Hospitality House on Penfield Road.

Cocktails will be served from 7:30 with a buffet dinner at 8:30, followed by dancing.

A special effort is being made

by various parish groups to invite new parishioners to the affair. Couples or singles are most welcome. Table reservations are available for 4 or 5 couples.

Telephone reservations through Jan. 16 are being taken by Mrs. Helen Verduysee, 223-7945, Mrs. Sally Anne, 586-5823, Mrs. Mary Kernan, 586-0665, and Mrs. Mary Jean Messmer, 381-0607.

## Implement Stand on Boycott, Prelate Urges U.S. Bishops

**Washington, D.C. [RNS]** — Each U.S. Roman Catholic bishop was urged to implement, "personally, in private and in public," a November resolution by all American bishops to support the United Farm Workers boycott of table grapes and lettuce.

In a memorandum to members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), Auxiliary Bishop Joseph F. Donnelly of Hartford, Conn., chairman of the bishops Ad Hoc Committee on Farm Labor, said:

"Institutions under the jurisdiction of the bishop should be advised of the boycott and asked to support it. Priests and religious should be requested to support the action of the bishops, bring it to the attention of the people, and request organized support for the boycott."

Bishop Donnelly added that the diocesan press should "convey the concern of the bishops," and that priests, senators, religious communities, universities and hospitals should

be asked not to purchase boycotted products.

The prelate's memo to the U.S. bishops mentioned that Frank Fitzsimmons, president of the Teamsters Union, had "circulated" the bishops with what he claimed to be "the true facts" concerning the dispute between the UFW, an AFL-CIO affiliate, and the Teamsters over representation of farm workers.

Charging that Fitzsimmons' recital of facts "is in my opinion a bit dreamy," Bishop Donnelly said the Teamsters have consistently resisted UFW requests for free elections and recanted on several promises to get out of UFW jurisdiction areas.

Responding to Fitzsimmons' charge that the UFW boycott is illegal, Bishop Donnelly said the UFW is not under the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Act. He said the boycott "is not illegal. Nor is it immoral."

In a telegram to Cardinal John Krol of Philadelphia, president of

the NCCB, copies of which were sent to all bishops, Fitzsimmons urged the bishops "to rescind the action that you have taken supporting the boycotts."

Claiming that the bishops are not harming the Teamsters or helping the farm workers, the Teamster president said, "What you are doing and what Mr. (Cesar) Chavez (UFW president) is doing is creating unrest and depriving the American public of the opportunity to buy goods in the market place, which every citizen is entitled to do."

(At its general meeting in November, the NCCB went on record in support of the right of farm workers to free and secret elections on union representation and urged the growers and Teamsters to accede to this demand of the UFW.)

An accompanying resolution expressed the NCCB's endorsement and support of the UFW's consumer boycott of table grapes and lettuce "until such a time as free, secret ballot elections are held."

Noting that the resolutions passed by the bishops were protesting the "injustice" of growers and Teamsters in refusing farm workers the exercise of a "basic human right," Bishop Donnelly repeated in his memo that the boycott is necessary to make the protest effective.

"In my opinion," he said, "the action of the bishops in this matter and the action of church groups generally throughout America, is a noble instance of protest against injustice and support of the poorest of workers."

Bishop Donnelly enclosed with his memo to each bishop a copy of a statement by George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, and a letter Meany sent to Cardinal Krol. In the letter, Meany said:

"The essential fact is that the Teamsters raided the Farm Workers Union in an effort to destroy it and take over its membership and its contracts. Thousands of farm workers who had built their own union and who have been represented by that union for a number of years have been forced to have the Teamsters represent them through a series of secret deals made by Teamster officials."

"when limitation of population growth is truly necessary for the good of society," the statement said, "respect for personal freedom requires that it be brought about by self-restraint, not by external pressure or coercion."

The statement observed that too often the technical and abstract aspects of population growth distract people from a human consideration of the problem. The child, it said, often becomes a target of population projections, and his dignity is violated as a result.

"All discussions concerning population should emphasize the value and dignity of children," the statement declared. "Parents should think of children as a benefit rather than a burden, and should be willing to make sacrifices for them."

"American parents have always been generous in this regard, but the present propaganda for Zero Population Growth seeks to undermine their generosity and raise selfishness to the level of virtue," it added.

# ZPG

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"Finally, a full exercise of basic human rights in regard to procreation also requires freedom from psychological pressure — a pressure that is often the result of misinformation, and sometimes of dishonest presentations of population data for propaganda purposes."

Concerning Catholic teaching on population, the statement pointed out that "choices about childbearing should not be left to chance, but should be the result of careful deliberation, mutual trust and confidence, and faith in God's providential care for His people."

The statement went on to affirm the Church's rejection of methods of family planning that "directly frustrate procreation, and which do not conform to the moral law 'authentically interpreted' by her teaching authority." It also reminded that the Church should "exercise a special pastoral concern for married couples and families."

Acknowledging certain cases

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