

Liturgy Institute Speaker:

'Master the Roman Missal First'

Father John Callen, SJ, who will speak at the annual Diocesan Liturgy Institute next month, sees the goal of liturgy reform as "a continuity with the tradition and a new expression for an age-long tradition."

The search for new expression is "very interesting and very exciting," he told the diocesan liturgy staff during a visit here earlier this year. But he cautioned against hasty attempts at "cultural adaptation."

"We need first to master the Roman Missal and the Sacramentary and then, in that context, ask questions about cultural evolution and adaptation," he said. "There is a vast amount of catechesis needed

about the meaning of the new Sacramentary and all the other rites as well."

Father Callen is a member of the Notre Dame University faculty and director of the Murphy Center for Liturgical Research. He is president of the North American Academy of Liturgy and editor of Eucharistic Liturgies. He will be keynote speaker at the diocesan institute, scheduled for Aug. 22-23 at Keuka College.

Interviewed by Mary Lou Andrychuk of the liturgy office; Father Callen indicated his approach to the matter of new expression for American parishes. He spoke of the "American frontier spirit" which he said

contains "a sign of human transcendence."

"Americans are not content with being at one point," he said. "They constantly seek what is beyond, which is really a way of talking about transcendence."

He pointed out that liturgical renewal had been in process for a dozen years, and that the first

stage, dealing with authentic tradition, had produced a series of books.

"We have an enormous challenge to master what's in those books, both in theory and in practice," he said, because "if you're going to talk about cultural adaptation, you've really got to have something to adapt."

"I like to summarize it in a very traditional way, a way I think everyone can understand."

"We want to get in the position where we can say 'Faith of our Fathers, living still,' so it really is the faith of those who have gone before us and yet, at the same time, it is our experience of it, living still in us."



"Twenty per cent of the people earn 40 per cent of the income in the United States." How often have you heard that dictum in recent months from pulpits, read it in Catholic magazines, and had it drummed at you by some justice-and-peace type celebrating either the Bicentennial or the Holy Year by telling you what a rotten country America is?

Indeed the United States Catholic Conference recently issued a booklet on inequality that was based on that statistic, arguing that ours was a horrendously unjust society. Since most of us don't feel like we are the victims of inequity, it must follow that we are the victimizers and should do hasty penance to expiate our guilt.

Okay the next time some cleric or messianic nun hurls that statistic at you ask him if he knows how the "Gini ratio" of the United States compares to that of other countries. That will stop him, because he has never heard of the "Gini ratio." Anyone who doesn't know what it is shouldn't be discussing complex problems of economic equity.

The Gini ratio is a statistic used by economists to describe the distribution of income in a country. The closer to 1.00 the number, the higher the inequality; the closer to 0, the less the inequality. The Gini ratio of the United States is 0.34. Is that low or high? Well, in a table prepared for "The U.S. and World Development" (Praeger) by the Overseas Development Council, there is a list of the Gini ratios for 56 countries. Only four of those countries, the United Kingdom (.30), Surinam (.30), Australia (.30), and Korea (.26) have lower Gini ratios. That means there is more inequality of income in the other 51 countries than there is in the United States.

Let's look at the ratio for some of the Third World countries. Tanzania, presided over by that saintly Christian Socialist Julius Nyerere has a ratio of .54. Peru, which sends us liberation theologians, weighs in at .61. Venezuela, that progressive kingpin of international oil riffs, scores .42. In the "developed" world of such supposedly "flat" income distributions, Holland, France, Denmark, and Sweden have Gini figures of .38, .50, .37, and .39 respectively.

Why don't we hear those data from the justice-and-peace boys? Or the Campaign for Human Development crowd?

Let's suppose that you don't go for Gini ratios; you just want to know how much of the income of a country goes to the top 20 per cent of the population. Just flip the page to 212 of "The U.S. and World Development" and find a list of 65 countries. Only four countries are lower than the 38.8 per cent of American income that goes to its top 20 per cent of population. Czechoslovakia's percentage is 31, Hungary's is 34, Poland's is 36, and Bulgaria's is 35. In other words, the explicitly socialist countries with an avowed program of eliminating all inequality from their societies, are able to shave a few points from the American proportion which goes to the top 20 per cent. The rest of the nations do worse. For example, the Netherlands' figure is 49; Sweden, 42; Denmark, 47; France, 54; West Germany, 53; Tanzania, 61; Venezuela, 65.

The USCC booklet told us that the distribution of income in the United States was the same as that in India, but in India the top one fifth of the population earns more than half the income. Was the USCC lying to us, or was the author just inept and uninformed?

The issues are complicated. Income equality grows with economic development — though it may fall in the early stages of that development. Still the United States has the lowest Gini curve of the three richest nations, in per capita income in the developed world (Sweden, Denmark, and the U.S.). There are obvious injustices in our society, and they ought to be corrected. But there is some question about how low the Gini curve can fall in any industrial society which still has political freedom. To shave a few points off it at the cost of single-party government such as exists in eastern Europe seems foolish indeed.

The Overseas Development Council's book is a gold mine of information and interpretation done by men of solid professional competence. Anyone interested in world economic problems should devour it.

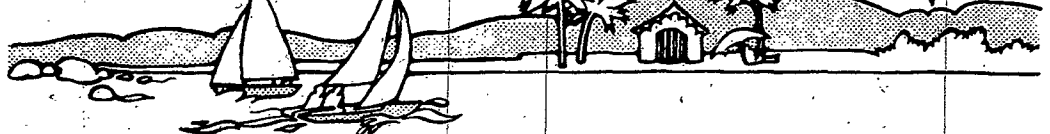
And until the USCC can put out something comparable, it ought not to do anything at all.

GOLDEN WEDDING

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Stenglein of Post Avenue celebrated the 50th anniversary of their marriage with a Mass at St. Pius X Church on July 14. The day before, they were honored at a party at the Carriage House. The Stengleins ran the Brooks Bakery for a number of years and then baked for Sibley's. Mr. Stenglein was born in Germany and came to the U.S. in 1905. There are two sons and a daughter, Raymond, William and Ann (Mrs. Donald Walch) and 17 grandchildren.

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