

New Column Aims at Assisting Parish Renewal

By Msgr. William Shannon

This is the first of an on-going series of articles on various aspects of pastoral liturgy in the diocese. The articles, written by different members of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and the Diocesan Music Commission, will attempt to discuss where we are liturgically in the diocese, where we should be and in what directions we ought to be moving. The articles will be pastorally oriented; their purpose to help parishes appropriate the insights of the liturgical renewal that has become a part of the life of the Catholic Church.

For the Catholic Church in the past ten years has undergone a gigantic renewal in its liturgical life — a renewal whose meaning and effectiveness we are not yet in a position to evaluate. The liturgical books have been revised. New rites have been given us for the celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. And what is even more important than the new

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books and the new rites is the undeniable fact that a whole new understanding of liturgical involvement has come into being. We have begun to use a whole new vocabulary to designate what we do at Mass. We used to speak of "hearing Mass" or "attending Mass". Today we talk of "celebrating" the Eucharist, of "participating" in the worship of a community. The Eucharist is no longer a service which the priest "conducts" and the rest of the people "follow". It is a community-celebration in which all members of the community have their role to play.

No one can deny that in the

serpents with their mouths stung some to death. They were called "saraph" serpents, because their sting caused a burning fever and finally death.

There is a saying, "The devil when sick the devil a saint would be; the devil when well, the devil of a saint was he." In their affliction the people turned to Moses, mind you, not to the Lord. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." They sought the intercession of a saint. And he prayed for the people, and God heard his prayer.

The answer was a strange one: "Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and if anyone who has been bitten looks at it, he will recover." **God took the very instrument of death and made it the vehicle of life.** In this way He foreshadowed a greater redemption, when His Son would take another instrument of death—the cross—and make it the key to life. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that all who believe may have eternal life in him" (R3).

Why did the people in Moses' day, why do we in our own day, so easily turn to complaining against God and religion when things do not go the way we expect them to? The Response in Sunday's liturgy gives us the answer—it is our forgetfulness! "Do not forget the works of the Lord!" (Response) Five times we shall repeat those words next Sunday. Will repetition breed understanding?

Another saying is this: "Who will not give heed to the rudder, must give heed to the rocks." Our Lord pleads, "Hearken, my people, to my teaching. Shall we? Or must we wait for chastisement to sober us? While He slew them they sought him and inquired after God again." No wonder Shakespeare could write: "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

This is especially true of the cross. It literally saved Don Fermin's life. It saved many of the Israelites in the desert. It saves the world.

When birds fly, they form a cross.

When fish swim, they too form a cross.

Even trees, from which the cross was made, lift leafy arms in prayer in the form of a cross.

Only the serpent, of all living creatures, seems to be totally devoid of the idea of the cross until Moses lifted it up from the desert and put it on a cross and thus deprived it of its fiery bites: "Do not forget the works of the Lord" — especially His cross.

"We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, because by your cross you have redeemed the world."

is that they will have all the answers to the many liturgical problems that may arise in today's world of change and transition.

We hope you will join us each week by reading this column. We hope also that you will write us,

letting us know your reactions to what we say and suggesting topics you would like to have discussed in future columns. We want to be of genuine service to all those who are engaged in liturgical renewal.

William H. Shannon

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WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamoni

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 3: 13-17; (R1) Nm. 21, 21: 4-9. (R2) Phil. 2: 16-11.

In the cathedral in Mexico City, there is an old crucifix—"Our Lord of the Poison." The body of Christ on it is blue-black, like that of a body which had been poisoned. Originally the corpus had been snow-white.

Our Lord's body blackened in this way, according to the story. A Spanish grandee, Don Fermin Andueza, used to pray every day at the foot of this crucifix. Don Fermin was loved by the poor because of his kindnesses to them. He was just as intensely hated by some of his peers because his goodness cast reflections on theirs.

One man in particular, Don Ismael Trevino (no relation to the golfer), hated him. He sent a poisoned cake to Don Fermin, who ate it. In mortal agony, Don Fermin dragged himself to the crucifix. Don Ismael followed his victim to see the end. He saw Don Fermin kiss the feet of the Crucified. Then the miracle happened—the white feet slowly turned black and, as in capillary action, this sombre color steadily climbed up the body until it was all ebony. As a poultice sucks out venom, so the Crucified drew into Himself the poison, and Don Fermin rose a healthy man.

Sunday's Liturgy focuses on the cross of Christ. And it shows the cross as the instrument that can rid us of the spiritual poisons within us.

When the Chosen People were wandering in the desert after their deliverance from Egypt, they murmured against God. Scripture, with its usual charity, tries to mitigate the sin by explaining that the patience of the people was worn out by the journey. When we are tired out, we too complain against God; and, for Moses, we substitute the Church or religion. Like them, too, our complaints are often over trivia: not that we lack food, but pleasurable food, food to delight the palate.

How did God bring the people to their senses? Believe it or not, by capital punishment. He repaid like by like. The people had sinned with their mouths, so

past ten years our liturgical practices have changed significantly. The really serious problem that we face today is that changes in liturgical practices have not always been accompanied by a corresponding deepening of liturgical insights. What causes honest confusion in the minds and hearts of many people today is that, while they are doing things differently at Mass from what they did before, they are not, in really significant ways, thinking differently about the Eucharist from what they thought before.

If there is to be a true liturgical renewal in the Church, it must be a renewal that reaches and transforms the minds and hearts of all who participate in liturgy. For Catholic understanding of liturgy will not grow simply by adding new insights alongside of the old; rather new insights will alter the way we look at the total picture of liturgy and all that it involves. The older elements of our thinking will not be discarded; rather they will be transformed into a new synthesis that will give new life and meaning to what we are doing in our liturgy. To achieve such a synthesis is no easy task. It requires time, patience and a good deal of catechesis.

Diocese Names Director Of Finance

Thomas A. Weber has been named director of finance for the diocese, it was announced last week by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan. The appointment became effective Sept. 1.

Weber will direct the overall activities of general accounting internal auditing and financial forecasting for the diocese. He will provide the Diocesan Finance Committee and external auditors with financial information on the various diocesan operations.

In making the appointment, Bishop Hogan stated that the diocese is happy to engage Weber's financial expertise and is pleased to secure his leadership in financial matters.

Weber is a graduate of Canisius College in Buffalo, with a BBA degree. He and his wife, Jane, are the parents of six children. He comes to the diocese with over 25 years in the financial community, including 13 years as treasurer-comptroller with the Gunlocke Company and eight years with Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Company.

JOB INFORMATION

The Rochester Public Library has put together a Job Information Center at the Rundel Memorial Building, 115 South Ave. It will be open during regular library hours, 9-5 weekdays and 9-5 Saturdays. The center, supported by a federal grant, is run by the Business and Social Science division. It is stocked with materials on preparing for and securing employment, plus lists of job openings all over the country. It is not an employment agency.

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