

THE OPEN WINDOW



Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father Hohman,

Why have so many of the churches removed the altar rails? The churches recently built have not installed altar rails. I loved kneeling at the altar rail and when I did, I felt closer to God. I did not feel separated from him. The altar rail reminded me of my position in relation to God and to the clergy. God is above and beyond the everyday life. The priest has a difficult role as he does represent God and yet he still must be one with his flock. The altar rail as a symbol kept him in his proper perspective. As with each relationship, there are boundaries.

I found it more satisfying to kneel when I received Holy Communion and to stay for a few seconds to ponder this sacrament. Now the communion rush is something that tends to make this sacrament less meaningful. It is a struggle to reach the front of the church and another struggle to return to the pew. Instead of feeling that I am attending the Lord's supper as a banquet, I feel I am in an

overcrowded cafeteria line with impatient customers. The awe and the deep reverence is lacking. I prefer to attend an early weekday Mass when the church is not crowded and when the quietness of the church is conducive to prayer and communion with God.

That's the way I feel, I.F.G.

Dear I.F.G.,

Your last sentence brings out a very important point: your relationship to Sunday worship (or worship in general) is that you want it to be a thing between God and yourself alone, and the more others can be kept from intruding on that relationship, the better. What very good teachers we were but what bad matter we taught! Granted that there should be times when we can pray in silence and solitude, LITURGY, which is public worship must be done IN community AS community. There is no such thing as Liturgy without community. And isn't it great that so many more people are going to Communion that it seems like "a busy cafeteria." Remember the "good old days" when at Midnight Mass Communion was delayed until after Mass because there was such a rush? You tend to forget that!

It is true that when the Liturgy was changed we surrendered some of the "mystery" which was so much a part of the old, but I think we gained in exchange a much greater sense of participation. Incidentally when you spoke of God being above and beyond everyday life, you really didn't mean it or you have a peculiarly narrow idea of God.



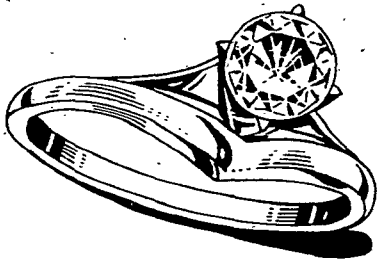
Chapel Concert

The St. Joseph Sisters Concert Chorale sang in the Motherhouse chapel last Sunday afternoon for guests at a reception in honor of Sister Jamesine Riley and other members of the new congregational administration. Shown here are Sisters Dorothy Ellen Muldoon and Beatrice Ganley; Ruth Ann Dupre and Mary Ann Coughlin; Barbara Staropoli and Jean Collins, in front.

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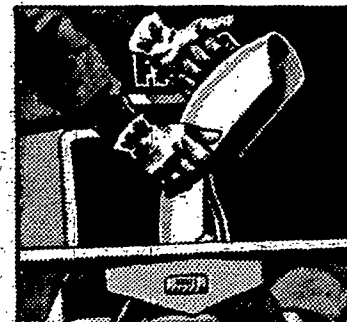
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