

What Is Pastoral Liturgy?

Part III
By Msgr. William H. Shannon

INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

In the previous articles, I have tried to suggest what a sound liturgical theology is. Liturgy is not just a series of external acts that we perform as correctly as possible. It is the celebration of the faith experience of a parish community.

The question we have to ask now is: how do we make such a liturgical understanding a reality in parish life? How do we make it a celebrated event? How do we create a liturgy that expresses and nourishes the contemporary faith experience of people?

We have to know the faith dimensions of that community: its frailties, its strengths, its problems and questions. We have to help that community to realize its faith, to express that faith and, by expressing it, to deepen it. Faith is the experience of the Lord's presence in our lives. The task of liturgy is to announce the presence of the Lord and to help people to surrender to His presence.

We announce His presence when we proclaim the readings which tell us what God has done for us and what He calls us to do in return. We announce His presence in the homily which takes the message of the Gospel and relates that message to the lives of this community. After the readings and the homily, we give people time to reflect so that they can truly respond to God's presence in His Word in a way that will have repercussions in their

daily lives. In the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest who presides at the liturgy announces the presence of the Lord by recounting and proclaiming all that God has done for us, especially what He has done for us in Jesus.

We announce His presence in the kiss of peace, wherein we express our desire to be at one and at peace with one another because Jesus is one with us. We announce His presence in the Meal we share. In the Eucharistic Meal we experience that He is our food and drink, that is to say, that He is the source of life for us. Our faith-life comes from Him.

In the liturgy, we announce the presence of the Holy One in all these ways, so that people may surrender to His presence not only for the brief moment of worship but also for the whole week that is ahead.

Thus, the third point regarding pastoral liturgy is that the celebration of liturgy must be related to the daily living of people. We have genuine liturgy only when the liturgical celebration effectively confronts people with the demands of the Gospel. We have

genuine liturgy only when the liturgical celebration makes people face up to the responsibility of making Christian decisions in their lives. We have genuine liturgy only when the liturgical celebration helps people to experience the presence of the Lord and respond to His presence.

That is why I have been saying that liturgy is possible only where you have a faith community. For liturgy renews faith and deepens it. But it cannot ordinarily create faith. Liturgy is always the celebration of a reality that is present and going on in people's lives. It is that which must be made a celebrated event.

NEXT WEEK: In the final part of this series, Msgr. Shannon discusses a properly catechised parish community.

parts are complementary, and form one liturgy.

The liturgy of the eucharist is always the same; it celebrates the presence of the risen Lord in the midst of His people. "This is my body. This is my blood" is but a Semitic way of saying, "This is the Lord Jesus."

The liturgy of the word specifies why He comes. One of the reasons is to make the word of God become flesh again — alive in our lives. In today's liturgy of the word, for instance, the theme focuses on hearing God's words. Jesus is present to help us open up to God's words, to listen, to unlock our ears, and unclutter our minds and fire our wills. He does not want us to fall under the malediction: "If any man will not listen to my words, I myself will make him answer for it." (R1) Five times He says, "Harden not your hearts."

If one should examine the old castles of England, I am sure he would be struck by the meagre openings they have for light. They are so small that one wonders how ever in the world did they read and write and live? With lancet windows and the only other apertures no bigger than the barrel of a gun, how did they ever manage to see within. What incomparable comforts we have today in our homes! Some with picture windows opening out on God's ample and beautiful world, others with smaller windows — but windows everywhere — so that God's glorious sunlight can pour in and drench every room in golden glory.

Those old castles, with stray beams struggling to enter halls and dungeons, forbidding God's glorious sunlight to enter, are a picture of men who shut out the Lord's words. Having eyes, they see not; having ears, they hear not. It is almost as impossible to penetrate their hearts as to assault successfully a castellated fortress with bow and arrow. Man is funny — he can throw up all kinds of mental blocks to the light of God's words. Even when the Son came, the Word of God Himself, men marveled at Him, but they would not let his light shine on them. The light shone in the darkness, but the darkness would not receive it.

Sunday's liturgy is a prayer and an appeal not to let the same thing happen to us. Greet the Gospel, the liturgy urges, with the prayer: "Speak, O Lord, your servant is listening." Will we be next Sunday?

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 1:21-28; (R1) Dt. 18:15-20; (R2) 1 Cor. 7:32-35.

The theme of Sunday's liturgy is an appeal to listen to God's word.

It seems ironic that the only one who listened to Jesus when He preached in the synagogue at Capernaum was an unclean spirit. The rest of the people were simply spellbound. "He's wonderful," they said. They were touched by the authority with which He spoke. His words had the ring of conviction. He seemed authentic, sincere, real. They felt this, but they stopped there — at a feeling. They talked about Him, gave Him rave notices, but that was all — his reputation spread.

Twelve hundred years before this gospel incident, God spoke to His people in thunder and fire. Their sole reaction was a request that He cease to speak that way. With wondrous condescension, God acceded. Graciously He promised a prophet, like Moses, not imported from some foreign nation, but raised up from their own kinsmen. And still, when He came unto His own, His own received Him not. The terrible, terrible tragedy.

In the revision of the mass liturgy, the Church has once again restored God's word to its rightful place. The sanctuary has been restructured so that the two divisions of the mass may be clearly seen: there is the ambo from which the word is proclaimed, and the altar table where the Word is made flesh.

Any attempt to separate the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist, as if they were not interrelated, leads to a misunderstanding of the unity of the mass and distorts its celebration. The two

Cancer Patient Group Organizing in Macedon

Macedon — A self-help organization for Wayne County cancer patients, their families, and others with illnesses considered incurable, will hold its first meeting at 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3 in the Parish Hall of St. Patrick's Church, 50 Main St. here.

Called "Make Today Count," it is a branch of a national organization founded to help patients cope with their illnesses through mutual support and shared information and experiences. Assisting information of the chapter is the Monroe County Cancer and Leukemia Association, which sponsors a "Make Today Count" unit in Rochester.

The main speaker will be Dr. Francis Czurzak, a human relations consultant. Also assisting will be Mrs. Noreen Miller, chairwoman of the Monroe County chapter, and Mrs. Sharleen Bruse, executive

director of the Monroe County Cancer and Leukemia Association.

The Wayne County chapter is being sponsored by the Human Development Committee of St. Patrick's Church. Co-chairman for the project, Frank Tomek, reported that there are approximately 250 new cancer patients per year in Wayne County. He said anyone wishing information about the program should call him at 597-6598 or co-chairman Don Kneeland at 986-2307.

CENACLE RETREAT

Among the programs which will be offered in February at the Cenacle Retreat House is a general retreat for women led by Father Euclid Marier. The retreat will be held Feb. 13-15 at the East Avenue facility. Further information is available through Sister Marie Halligan, RC, at (716) 271-8755.

COURIER-CALENDAR

Showboat Night — Dinner, dancing, auction, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 31, St. Thomas More school gym. James and Sharon Comisso in charge. Reservations: 385-1859.

Catholic Widowed Parents — Regular meeting, 8:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6, St. Theobald's, 168 Spencerport Rd. Talk by Dr. Samuel P. Aversano, associate medical director, at St. Ann's Home, refreshments.

Voice Recital — Sister Barbara Staropoli of Nazareth College faculty will sing "The Golden Vessel," by William Ferris of the American Conservatory of Music, Chicago, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, Nazareth College Arts Center.

The Matchmaker — East High Thespians, Troupe 3323, 8 p.m. tomorrow and Friday, Jan. 29, 30, in school auditorium, 3801 East Main.

Irondequoit Community Theatre — Auditions for Lanford Wilson's "Lemon Sky," 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3, and Thursday, Feb. 5, Cafeteria B, Eastridge High School, 2350 East Ridge Rd.; production scheduled for April 9 and 10. For information: Gary Dechau, 467-4253; after 7 p.m.

Mazowsze Song and Dance Company — Ninety performers from Poland, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4, Auditorium Theatre. Tickets at Original Performances, 270 Midtown Plaza.

Dames at Sea — Broadway musical, performed by Continental Theatre Company, 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30, Nazareth Arts Center.

Tickets at Original Performances, 270 Midtown Plaza, or at door.

Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra — 100 musicians from 43 junior and senior high schools in concert, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, Monroe Community College Little Theatre; 51 Free concert 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3, Long Ridge Mall.

Behind the Scenes in Albany — League of Women Voters forum, 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5, Monroe County Cooperative Extension, 249 Highland Ave.; Assemblymen Tom Frey, John Daly, former legislative assistant Elizabeth Steinberg.

Women in Prison — Talk by the Rev. Merle Bitner, 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 2, Church of the Master, 8495 Lake, sponsored by Girl Scout Senior Troop 82.

Patterns of Jewish Identification — Talk by Moshe Kérem, Harfa University lecturer, principal of Western Galilee Regional High School and director Oranin Kibbutz College, 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4, Temple B'Rith Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood. Public, no admission charge.

Arts for Aging Program — Courses for activities leaders from senior citizen centers, clubs, nursing homes, open next week at Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester Museum, Eastman School. For details and registration: Diane Bull, Arts Council of Rochester, 442-0570.

Stamp Collectors Show — Including 220 first-

day covers, soccer stamps from 94 countries, Jan. 31, Feb. 1, Dome Arena, Monroe County Fairgrounds, East Henrietta Road at Calkins, Saturday hours 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday, 10-6.

Water Safety — Red Cross retaining program for water safety instructors, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25, Monroe YMCA; Feb. 16, 18, 23, 25, Greece Athena High School; March 20, 21, Fairport High School; May 10, 12, 17, 19, Pittsford Sutherland High School. To register: 275-9800.

Income Tax Help — Internal Revenue Service representatives at South Avenue Branch Library, 715 South Ave., 5-8 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 9, March 1; Lincoln Branch, 585 Clifflord, Saturday, Jan. 31, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Wheatley Community Library, 13 Bronson Ave., 5-8 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 18, March 31, and Monday, April 12; Biblioteca Manuel-Alonso, 946 Clifflord, 19 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, April 3 (Spanish interpreters provided). Free.

Religious Contributions to American Values — Lecture series sponsored by West Irondequoit clergy as contribution to Bicentennial presents U of R Professor William Green on Judaism and American Civilization, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, Irondequoit High School, 260 Cooper Rd. (large group instruction room).

St. Jude's Men's Club — Wednesday evening, church hall, Paul Wind, guest speaker, on income tax changes; Italian dinner.

Divorced Catholics — New group meeting at St. Alphonsus, Auburn, 7:40 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3; newcomers welcome.

Deadline

Calendar items should be mailed to the Courier-Journal Calendar Desk, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Deadline is Wednesday noon, one week ahead of the publication date.

Penance Rite To Be Aired

The Southeast region is sponsoring a workshop for area religious educators dealing with the new rite of Penance. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 8, at Guardian Angels Church, 2059 East Henrietta Road.

Father Albert Delmonte, associate pastor, will discuss the new rite at 7 p.m. Following his address participants may choose from a variety of mini-sessions which deal with different aspects of Penance.

Father Robert Kennedy, director of the diocesan department of liturgy, will speak in the Northwest region on the new rite at 8 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 28 at Sacred Heart School Hall, 311 Flower City Park. All parishioners of the regional churches are invited.

PULPIT EXCHANGE

Clyde — In the spirit of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Father Robert L. Coonan, pastor of St. John the Evangelist and Rev. Charles Hess, pastor of the United Methodist Church, spoke in each other's church. A dinner followed with parishioners from both congregations attending.

Tribunal Officials to Talk To Divorced-Catholic Unit

Auburn — Father Robert F. O'Neil and Father R. Richard Brickler of the diocesan Marriage Tribunal will be guest speakers at the Feb. 3 meeting of the newly formed Auburn Divorced and Separated group.

"The group was formed because of the definite need in the community for divorced and separated people of the Catholic faith to realize they are a part of the Catholic family," explained Father Edward Palumbos, associate pastor

of St. Alphonsus and regional family life coordinator, for the region.

The Marriage Tribunal officials will explain annulment procedures and the current direction of the tribunal in implementing church laws and thinking.

The meeting will be at the St. Alphonsus cafeteria, 97 E. Genesee St. at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 3. It is open to all interested persons.

Westside Parish Sets 'Life Issues' Series

The Life Issues series provided by the Rochester Area Right to Life Education Committee has been scheduled by the St. Augustine Religious Education Committee for four successive Sundays, Feb. 1-22. All meetings will begin at 8 p.m. in the school hall, 410 Chili Ave.

The series will open with the topic, Appreciating the Handicapped. Other topics are Death with Dignity and the Euthanasia

Movement, The World of the Unborn and The Legal Aspects of the Abortion Issue and Alternatives to Abortion.

MASS FOR DEAF

Father Thomas Erdle will conduct a special liturgy for the deaf on Mass for Shutins at 8:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 8 over WHEC-TV, Channel 10. Bonnie Meath Lang will translate the liturgy into sign language for deaf viewers.