

Hymns in Honor of Mary

By Sister Josepha Kennedy

Every Catholic should dig out a copy of the Documents of Vatican II and, during the month of May, read Chapter VIII of the Constitution on the Church: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church. Then every Catholic should walk around in his or her memory until a hymn to Our Lady surfaces — a hymn which can be hummed through, dredging up all the words and meditating on their meaning. (Now stop and think: "Ave Maria," "Hail, Holy Queen," "Immaculate Mary," "Mother Dear, Oh, Pray For Me." Did you find one?) Now teach it to someone: children, choir, car pool, spouse, students.

The above is a concrete way to revive Marian hymnody, a body of devotional music which almost has passed into oblivion. I recently surveyed six new hymnals, all published between 1970 and 1975, and could list for you the grand

INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

total of 15 titles in honor of Mary. Even more discouraging is the fact that these 15 include only four "new" works (all commissioned for the 1971 New Catholic Hymnal). The rest are all old-timers: the above listed titles; three of four chants, "O Sanctissima," "On This Day, Oh, Beautiful Mother" and a few old tunes with new words added.

I asked a theologian why Mary has suffered such a loss of "position" and the answer helped me understand the musical dilemma. Mary's cult was always rooted in devotion; our new emphasis is on liturgy and sacrament. Novenas, the Rosary and May

shrines were all strong and beautiful, paraliturgical devotions which elicited marvelous vocal literature. They are in eclipse right now (even though the Liturgical Conference begins to sound hopeful about their revival) and so no new Marian music is forthcoming.

One notable exception is the work of Father Lucien Deiss. He has several lovely settings of the most ancient Marian texts. And Mary's Canticle (the "Magnificat") has been set by Joseph Gelineau and several others.

In the folk idiom, the F.E.L. publication, Hymnal for Young Christians, includes an attractive setting by Robert Blue. Don't neglect the older hymnals in your search. Cesar Franck's "Ave Maria" in the old St. Gregory remains a wholly satisfying choir work; the Jacques Arcadelt version, also in St. Gregory, was very commonly taught to school children and could be revived.

But the surest conclusion we can reach is that Mary's position in the Church should be as strong as ever and that musicians have a responsibility to express that cult whenever possible by selecting any of the dozens of Marian classics and performing them as perfectly as possible. The months of May and October, the seasons of Advent and Christmas remain times when Christian thought turns to Mary. If we are thinking of her more as symbol of the Church and perfect Christian than as our Mother and Queen of the May, it doesn't have to affect our joy in singing her praises. So launch your own private revival of that hymnody — and, musicians, let her praises ring out in our public worship.

Holy Ghost Concert Set

A concert of sacred and religious music at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, May 30, will open celebration of the centennial of Holy Ghost Church at 250 Coldwater Road.

Jack Risewick will direct the concert at the church and it will be tied in with the nation's bicentennial theme. Music will range from spiritual, early American choir, Gospel, modern choir, religious folk and variation to light rock selections.

Performers will include The Spiritualities, Epiphany Church Chorus, Antioch Full Mass Choir, St. Patrick's Folk Group, Holy Ghost Choir and Coldwater. Don Landers will serve as narrator.

The concert is open to the public with no admission fee.

time, the risen Jesus once again appeared to Saul in the Temple. This time Jesus hinted that Saul's work was going to be among the Gentiles. Fired by this vision, the impetuous Saul took right up where Stephen had left off. He started debating the Greek-speaking Jews, and aroused the same fury Stephen had. The church in Jerusalem, anxious perhaps to avoid another persecution, shipped Saul home to Tarsus. His stay in Jerusalem had lasted only 15 days; in Tarsus, four years. How painful this must have been for the flaming heart of Saul!


Again it was Barnabas who recalled Saul to action. Saul must have confided to Barnabas his Jerusalem vision and how Christ meant him to go among the Gentiles. Thus when Barnabas saw the church at Antioch beginning to evangelize the Gentiles, naturally he went to Tarsus to fetch Saul so that he might share in the new experiment. Together, they gave Christianity its universal orientation.

Today, we hear ad nauseam about crises in the Church. Vatican II is supposed to have precipitated these crises simply because it called Christians to change — to grow up! **Growing up means changing; and changing can foment crises — especially for those who don't want to grow up.**

What an example Saul offers us! Imagine the changes he had to make! Saul was a dedicated, religious Jew. He had studied Judaism under the greatest teachers of his day. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees par excellence. Then came the Damascus vision. "Change," Jesus ordered. "Go to the Christian community, to those to whose destruction you have been dedicating all your efforts; to those who stand for everything you feel in conscience is wrong! Saul was asked to make a right-about-face change. He did! What a harvest he reaped as a result!

In the last ten years, Vatican II has been asking Catholics to change, not in doctrine, but in depth — to grow up! Sometimes to leave familiar things, as Saul did, only to gain greater things. The branch must cling to the vine, true, but it must be pruned, must grow to produce fruit.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr.
Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 15:1-8. (R1) Acts 9:26-31. (R2) 1 Jn. 3:18-24.

Sunday's gospel is an allegory; that is, each element in the story symbolizes something else. For instance, the vine is Jesus. He is the true vine in contradistinction to Israel, the vine of the Old Testament. Jesus forms a new Israel from those who cling to Him. The vinegrower is His Father. And we are the branches.

The condition for producing fruit is to cling to the vine. This is achieved by faith and love, by accepting the words of Jesus and by praying. If one doesn't, he is lopped off and withers, like Judas. In the words of St. Augustine, "aut vitis aut ignis" — either the vine or the fire (of hell).

The condition for producing abundant fruit (good works) is through pruning by the Father, which consists of enduring sufferings and trials.

The first reading in Sunday's liturgy speaks of two branches which cling to the Vine: Saul and Barnabas. Of the two, the liturgy is concerned chiefly with Saul. How he was pruned! How he suffered (2 Cor. 11:22-33)! Yet how abundant his fruits!

Three years after his conversion, Saul went up to Jerusalem to see Peter (Gal. 1:18). But people were afraid of him. They did not know he had changed — war between Herod and Aretas had cut off communications between Jerusalem and Damascus.

A man named Barnabas came to Saul's help. Barnabas was well qualified to act as intermediary. In shape he was like a Grecian god (Acts 14:12); in character he was generous to a fault (4:37) and supportive (his name meant "son of encouragement"). Big-minded, a reconciler, a peacemaker, he so enjoyed the confidence of the apostles that when the reception of Gentiles into the church at Antioch called for consummate tact and delicacy, it was Barnabas they chose to send to investigate.

On Barnabas's say-so, Saul was accepted by the disciples. At this

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'QUEENSHIP' FETE

The St. Louis Rosary Guild's annual Queenship of Mary banquet Tuesday evening, May 18, will be preceded by a Mass and crowning ceremony at 6 p.m. A social hour is scheduled for 7:15 at the French Quarter Restaurant in East Rochester. Father Charles Lavery, president of St. John Fisher College, will be the dinner speaker.

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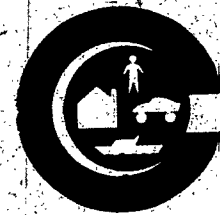


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