

# INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

## 'Is There Anyone Sick Among You?'

By FATHER ROBERT J. KENNEDY

"Is there anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him and anoint him in the name of the Lord. This prayer, made in faith will save the sick man. The Lord will restore his health, and if he has committed any sins, they will be forgiven." (James 5:14-15)

The Church has translated this admonition of James into the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. From the very beginning, the Church has sought to imitate the example of Jesus, whose constant concern for the care of the sick fills fully one-third of the gospel narratives. With faith, prayer, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil, the Church has brought this same care to her sick members.

Since December 1974, the new Rite for the Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick has been in use in our country. Immediately, one notices that the name has been changed from "Extreme Unction," or, in popular speech, "last rites." This change occurred because a full study of the history of this sacrament showed it to be a sacrament for the living, it is neither a final anointing before death nor necessarily the last rites of the Church.

Anointing of the Sick is the Church's prayer for the strength and return to health of its members when they are seriously ill. And it is a prayer of faith because we know the challenge that human sickness is to our faith, but also the opportunity it provides us to grow in the likeness of Christ, who suffered deeply on our behalf. The change in name, then, signifies a more thoroughgoing change in our understanding: this sacrament is one of life, strength, encouragement and hope for healing.

The name also betrays the scope of this sacrament. It is the Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick. After a faith-filled introduction on the meaning of the

sacrament and its rites (paragraphs 1-5 could be used as a bulletin insert for a parish's reflection and prayer), Chapter I speaks of the visitation and communion of the sick. The celebration of the Rite really begins when "all Christians share in the care and love of Christ and the Church for the sick and show their concern for them, as much as each one is able, by visiting them and comforting them in the Lord, offering them fraternal help in their need." (Paragraph #42). Thus, care of the sick is a Christian responsibility and a community event. This work is climaxed in visits by parish priests and families who regularly bring Holy Communion to the sick, shut-in and infirm in nursing facilities, hospitals and their own homes.

Chapter II deals with the actual rite of anointing the sick person, and it especially encourages that this sacrament — as all sacraments should be — take place in a communal setting, at least with the family, friends and neighbors present, even if the sick person is confined to bed. Of course, out of this comes the current practice in many of our parishes of communal anointing in church—a joyous and important parish celebration! Whatever form this rite takes, wherever possible it should be well-prepared for the priest, planning with the sick person or his family and explaining the significance of the sacrament while choosing appropriate scripture texts and prayers.

Chapters III-IV address the sacramental ministry for and pastoral care of the dying. In these chapters, the real "last rites" are restored, namely, Penance and Holy Communion (Viaticum), and a caring ministry for the dying person and his or her family is encouraged. In the case of emergencies, anointing of course would be included in these rites, but normally this sacrament would have been celebrated by the time a person had become seriously ill. Next week we will discuss whom this might include.

**Ugly Memory.** Worst spinoff of the political hassle that nearly destroyed the Montreal Olympics was the interview ABC presented between its specialist Pierre Salinger and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Regardless of the pros and cons of the Taiwan question, Salinger was just plain rude. Even after Trudeau explained his position, Salinger arrogantly pursued the same line of questioning. If CBC treated Gerald Ford the same way, we might have needed armed guards on the border. If it was taped, then shame on ABC for not scrubbing it.

**Bugles Blare for OTB.** Yes, business is booming at OTB, particularly in New York City. But they may be blowing "Taps" before long if the State of New York doesn't soon look to help the people who put on the show—the track operators. New York City OTB last year handled over \$773 million! By contrast, Western Regional (including Rochester) handled \$55 million. Now by this statistic, Total revenue to New York State was \$20 million. If the total OTB handle had been wagered at the tracks, the State's share would have been \$90 million, and the tracks would have received roughly the same, with 45 per cent of that going to horsemen. Do the tracks need it? Aqueduct, Belmont and Saratoga sustained near-record losses of \$3.2 million last year. The goose laying the golden eggs may perish before Albany awakens.

## Yugo Priests Defy Vatican

By LAURENCE MULLIN and ROBERT JOHNSTON  
Religious News Service Staff Writers

New York — An entire province of the Roman Catholic Franciscan order has openly defied the Vatican by refusing to relinquish more than a dozen parishes it has served for centuries in Yugoslavia and by challenging the Vatican's dismissal of the provincial board and superior, it was learned here.

Despite the fact that the Franciscans have been ordered to maintain absolute silence concerning the dispute, information and documents furnished to Religious News Service show that the 300 Franciscans of Hercegovina, based in Mostar, Yugoslavia, have rejected a Vatican order to turn over 17 parishes to the local bishop because the people have spurned diocesan control of their parishes.

The long-simmering dispute culminated last month in a joint decree issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, which dismissed the Hercegovina provincial, Father Rufinus Silic, OFM, and all six members of the provincial board.

In addition, the decree ordered Father Silic to leave the country, and threatened further canonical penalties for continued non-compliance with the original Vatican order to transfer the 17 (of 35) Franciscan parishes to Bishop Petar Cule of Mostar-Duvno.

Informed sources told RNS that the Franciscan-Vatican controversy began in 1964 when Bishop Cule received authorization from the Vatican to take over four Franciscan parishes. Although the Franciscans vacated the four parishes, the parishioners refused to abide by the transfer, locked up the churches and rectories and refused to allow diocesan priests to take over.

For six months, the parishioners rejected all attempts by the bishop and Vatican representatives to resolve the question in favor of Bishop Cule, even depriving themselves of Mass and ministry. Then, one by one, the Franciscan priests returned to the parishes and resumed their administration. The situation remained relatively stable until June 1975, when a decree signed by Pope Paul ordered the Franciscans to vacate the four parishes and prepare to relinquish another 13 parishes.

Although the document was published in the Zagreb Roman Catholic newspaper, Glas Conclia, the Hercegovina Franciscans' provincial board ignored the decree and continued to administer their parishes. Last April, the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples ordered all members of the Mostar province to sign a statement accepting the 1975 decree.

The Hercegovina Franciscans unanimously refused to comply.

It was at this point, RNS learned, that the Vatican congregations issued the joint decree dismissing Father Silic, the six members of the board, and ordering the provincial superior to leave Yugoslavia.

On June 14, the Hercegovina Franciscans issued a declaration of protest, in which they expressed their loyalty to the Catholic Church and to "our people." But they called the Vatican decree a "direct contradiction" to the Vatican II Declaration on Religious Liberty and the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.

Sources in Yugoslavia have indicated that the government favors diocesan control of all parishes, particularly in heavily-Catholic Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina.

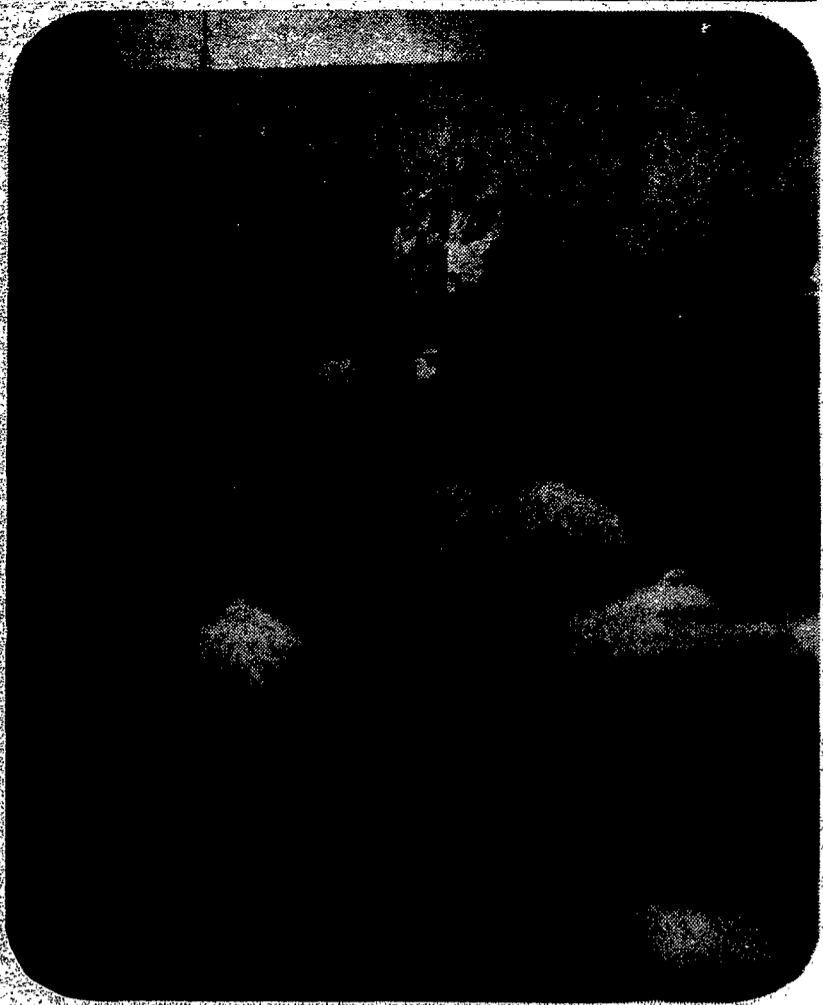


Photo by Maria Toombs

### Father Erdle Honored

The chapel at Becket Hall filled Saturday night with persons who gathered to honor Father Thomas Erdle for his 25 years of work with the deaf. Father Erdle, chaplain at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT, celebrated Mass and a reception in his honor followed.

## Modern Hymn Ordered Stricken from VA Book

Veteran's Administration chaplains in the diocese will comply with a national directive to suppress a controversial hymn printed in 15,000 new multi-faith hymnals.

The books received this spring at the Bath VA hospital have not even been unpacked.

Father Jeffrey Fairfield, Catholic chaplain at the Bath VA hospital, explained that "we never asked for the new books and we never planned to use them."

The controversy centers on a modern hymn, "It Was on Friday Morning" by Sidney Carter, which dramatizes the bitterness of one of the robbers crucified with Christ. Its refrain is "It's God they ought to crucify instead of you and me, I said to the carpenter a-hanging on the tree."

Father Roger Brady of the Canandaigua VA hospital said the hymn would not be used but that "perhaps some of the sacrilegious comments aren't so sacrilegious when taken in context. Interpretation has an awful lot to do with it."

Chaplain James Rodgers, director of chaplain services for the

Veteran's Administration asked for the removal of the hymn from the 815-page Book of Worship for United States Forces.

"We do not think it the proper hymn to be sung in a hospital where there are sick people... it is sacrilegious," said Chaplain Rodgers, a United Methodist.

The volume was published in 1974 as a multi-faith hymnal under the supervision of the Armed Forces Chaplain Board. Costing about \$1 million for research and production expenses, the hymnal has drawn widespread criticism, especially from Congress.

Chaplains have been asked to remove the offending hymn. The Canandaigua facility blacked it out with India ink, without harming parts of four other hymns which share the same pages. They plan to use the hymn book sometime in the future, but have continued using Missalettes, Catholic bulletins and the Elmhurst hymnal for Protestant services. The Bath VA hospital never plans to use the books.

**IN THIS CORNER**  
  
**George Beahon**

**Hopscotching The Sports Beat** and scratching one football exhibition on network TV. The Coaches' All America Game is a casualty. The only real losers are the college coaches themselves, who were the main beneficiaries of the extravaganza in late June. There were charities that benefited some, after the days when the game struggled in Buffalo and Atlanta, and then apparently found a home in that hotbed of football Lubbock, Texas. But the attraction self-destructed. For two related reasons: 1 — The ex-seniors, most of them hoping to make the pros, were reluctant to risk injury before clinching contracts. 2 — The pros were reluctant to have their prospects away from rookie camps. Net result was too many nobodies in uniforms thus dwindling attendance. It's not yet official, but it is an almost certain dropout on the TV football calendar.

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