

The Sunday Liturgy

By MARY LOU ANDRYCHUK

A recent report from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions addressed the "Displacement of the Sunday Liturgy." We thought the major points of this report worth sharing with all those who strive to provide an authentic and meaningful context for their community worship.

"One of the early reforms of the Roman liturgy was the re-ordering of the liturgical year and the simplification of the Roman Calendar. This ranks as one of the more important reforms that resulted from the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council."

"Unfortunately, we are today in danger of having the reform of the Church's year and its calendar jeopardized by well-intentioned efforts to celebrate almost anything and everything on Sunday."

"We have seen a proliferation of special Sunday celebrations imposed upon us by national and local offices and committees, often with a total insensitivity to the nature of Sunday as the weekly renewal of the passover of the Lord,

INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

and to the particular demands of the various liturgical seasons.

"These special celebrations whose observance are encouraged to take place on Sunday can be divided into two major groups: 1) those which promote a collection; 2) those which are concerned with a special theme or issue."

"Common to both of these observances is an appeal to celebrate the stated theme at all the Masses on a given weekend, the encouragement to preach on the topic at all Masses (a homily text is usually provided) and for this purpose, liturgical materials are often included (presidential prayers, introductions, scripture readings, general intercessions).

"One of the greatest difficulties with this sort of approach to celebrating the Sunday liturgy is its

apparent attempt to use the Sunday worship of a parish to sell something which has little, if any, connection with the scripture of the day or the theme of the liturgical season. Any attempt to impose these themes on the Sunday celebration do violence to the very basis of the recent calendar reform."

"To illustrate this point, all we need do is look at some of the themes we have been encouraged to observe on Sundays during the past year: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Brotherhood Week, Catholic Schools Week, Catechetical Sunday, Black Catholic Appeal, Vocation Sunday, Respect Life Sunday, Human Development Sunday, Catholic Relief Services Collection, Mission Sunday, Senior Citizens Sunday.

"By careful planning some of these themes could be integrated into the normal Sunday Eucharist when the text of the scripture readings or the theme of the season is appropriate, but this presumes that there is a respect for the integral nature of the liturgy and a desire to observe the spirit of the Church's reformed calendar. All too often, it seems that a date for a particular observance is set for utilitarian reasons with little, if any, advertence to the liturgy of the day."

Priests are usually encouraged and, often, even required to preach on the special topic and for this purpose sermons are provided. Since the sermon (as opposed to a homily) is usually not related to the scripture readings, suggestions are frequently given for other more appropriate scripture texts. This totally violates the purpose of having a well developed lectionary and encourages an attitude of 'If I don't like the readings, I'll just change them.'

"The liturgical materials that are sometimes provided for use on these occasions all too frequently manifest a total lack of understanding of the rules for composing liturgical texts, and in fact, of the very nature of the text itself."

National and diocesan level groups need to correct this situation. But in the meantime, parish staffs and liturgy committees can begin looking at how they celebrate and what emphasis they give to special themes. For example, instead of full sermons on a special theme, the parish bulletin and general intercessions might be better utilized. Many observances can be simply mentioned in the announcements before the dismissal.

In approving the revised Calendar, Pope Paul VI reminds us that "the paschal mystery unfolding throughout the liturgical year is of the greatest importance to Christian worship." Central to this is our perceiving and understanding Sunday as "the original feast day."

BARBECUE

Auburn — Holy Family Athletic Association annual chicken barbecue will be held Aug. 22, rain or shine, from noon until 6 p.m. Take-out service will be offered. Adults \$2.75; children \$1.50.

Now when somebody is popular or when you have nothing but good people surrounding you, it is pretty easy to be good. But when you're asked to follow somebody who is getting pretty unpopular or when there are people all around you who don't think or act like you, then the name of the game is "choice."

You can't get away from it: you have to make a choice.

This was the one big thing on Jesus' mind when He promised the Eucharist and on Joshua's mind when he was making his farewell address to his people.

Joshua gathered the tribes at Shechem. He was not asking God to recognize a people; he was asking the twelve tribes to recognize God as Lord and thus become a people of God. Their common faith and common cult were to constitute them a people, His people. But they had to choose the Lord and to ratify their choice by a rejection of false gods.

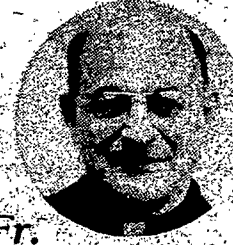
Jesus had gathered the new tribes of Israel, the twelve apostles, at Capernaum and asked them to recognize Him as the bread of life. The desertion of the crowds and the disciples demonstrates that one cannot choose Jesus without help from above. And the repeated references to the betrayal by Judas and the reference to Jesus' ascension foreshadowed the paschal mystery, the humiliation and glorification of Jesus.

What was true in the time of Joshua and in the time of Jesus is true in our own times. We know too much about Jesus, so we can't ignore Him. We have to make a choice. There's no getting around it. Either we choose Him and accept Him — or we turn our backs on Him.

He's not going to bind or gag us to force us to accept Him. If He had to do that to get our love, then our love wouldn't be worth having.

He wants us to choose Him freely. And when we do, that's when we begin living the Christian life. "Do you want to leave me too?" "Decide today whom you will serve."

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 6:60-69 (R1) Jos. 24:1-2, 15-18, (R2) Eph. 5:21-32.

Once a lad who was having psychiatric problems was told by his doctor that a job requiring more labor of the body than of the mind would be good therapy. The lad got a job in a supermarket. The manager was forewarned to give the lad work that required a minimum, intellectually. So the manager set the lad in a room with bushels of potatoes. He told the lad to separate the good potatoes from the bad ones. An hour later the manager came back to see how the lad was doing. Only a few potatoes had been separated.

The manager asked, "Is the work too much for you?"

"Oh no," the lad replied. "It's not the work; it's the decisions."

Life is decisions. Character is made or destroyed by decisions. The name of the game of life is "choice." But choices, though decisive, are not easy. The turning point in the life of the apostles came when our Lord asked them to make a choice. "Do you want to leave me too?" Just before he died, Joshua asked the twelve tribes of Israel to make a critical choice. "Decide today whom you will serve. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

At the time Jesus asked the apostles to make their choice, He was falling out of favor with the people and their leaders. He was beginning to be downright unpopular. The people had stalked away from Him and some of His disciples were murmuring against Him and breaking away.

At the time Joshua asked the twelve tribes to make their choice, they were in a land still sprinkled with heathen idol worshippers. Everyone had a friend who had a friend who had a friend who was an idol worshiper. It was impossible to get away from them.

Archbishop Bernardin Cited as Peacemaker

Philadelphia [RNS] — Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, received the 1976 Franciscan Peace Award at the 41st International Eucharistic Congress. The award was for his "outstanding peace-making abilities within the Church and on an international scale."

recipient was Archbishop Helder Camara of Olinda-Recife, Brazil.

Archbishop Bernardin a native of Charleston, S.C., was ordained a priest in 1952 and consecrated a bishop 10 years ago. He was appointed archbishop of Cincinnati in 1972 and became president of the bishops' conference and the U.S. Catholic Conference a year ago. Prior to that he had been general secretary of both.

The Franciscan Peace Award went to Mother Teresa of Calcutta in 1974 and to Pope Paul VI and the late Robert F. Kennedy, former attorney general of the United States, in other years. Last year's

UNITED WAY

The United Fund of Eastern Orleans County will join the area-wide United Way system, combining fund raising activities and administrative offices, but continuing to decide how funds will be allocated to UF-supported agencies.

Rochester area agencies include the United Community Chest of Greater Rochester, the United Way of Ontario County, the United Way of Wayne County, and the Geneva Community Chest.

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