

Daily Mass League

Trimmed Down but Still Active

Quo vadis, Daily Mass League?

Formed in the 1940s by a small group of Rochester laymen with the encouragement of Bishop James E. Kearney, the league hit its membership peak in the 1960s when it reported some 46,000 members both here in the diocese and around the world.

Since then, the same changes in societal attitudes and inflation which have plagued so many other organizations have had their effect on the league. To meet such problems the league in 1970 began charging dues; in 1973 it reversed this policy and dropped compulsory dues, but in an effort to streamline operation it shaved its list of some 40,000 names from around the world and concentrated on local membership.

Today, the Daily Mass League is far from dead, but as Angelo L. DiNieri, president, puts it, "We are in the same kind of financial difficulties everyone else is in."

In addition, membership, as in many other traditional religious pursuits, has declined to about 2,000, though this figure is merely a

speculation. The league no longer meets at Our Lady of Victory Church for daily Mass, but members are encouraged to attend noon and evening Masses which the league was instrumental in starting in various parishes.

"It's much healthier that we can attend Mass in our own church. All people have to do is to register with the Daily Mass League, but the Lord knows who belongs," said Frank Griffin, executive vice president.

The league, largely through the personal efforts of DiNieri and Griffin, still runs several programs, including the Channel 10 television Mass which it sponsors every other week, alternating with Aquinas Institute.

It distributes a booklet, Prayer and Meditations on the Living Christ and His Mother, the Unmistakable Woman of Scripture.

The booklet of prayer and meditation, carrying the imprimatur of Auxiliary Bishop John E. McCafferty, is available by writing to the Daily Mass League, Box 9490, Midtown Plaza, Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

The array would include vegetables prepared in assorted ways. For example, there would be sweet cucumber chunks, sliced bread and butter pickles and whole dills. Peppers might be pickled or first fried and then immersed in rich tomato sauce. Tiny red whole beets would get the pickling treatment. Larger beets would be chunked or sliced for use later to be shredded and topped with butter or Mom's harvard sauce.

It seemed as if there was nothing they did not grow or produce that they did not can. Corn cut neatly from the cob, carrots, cauliflower, peas, green beans. There were pears from the tree in the front yard, plums from the trees in back. Applesauce from the mini orchard. Jam and preserve from the wild strawberries and blackberries. I even recall jars of gooseberries. My grandmas raised chickens and rabbits and if I remember correctly surplus meat including venison, ended up on those shelves. Momma's mother depended on her canning product to help feed the 25 or 30 hunters from downstate that descended each year during bear and deer season. Our paternal grandmother kept her jars filled to supplement the menu on weekends when four sons and their families might come to dinner.

Potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, pumpkin and winter squash and bushels of apples were kept in part of the cellar where they would stay cold but not freeze.

Canning, of course, was not the only means of preserving food. The crock in Grandpa's basement was more than big enough for the pig's head swimming in it and the woodshed was a perfect place for drying red hot peppers as my rambunctious little sister found out one day to her regret bursting forth with screams and streaming eyes having touched the pretty things and then inadvertently rubbed her face.

While one grandfather had the pig's head delicacy aging in his cellar crock the other would be mashing grapes for making home-made wine in his.

The few jars of vegetables, relish pickles and jam that I have canned are but a drop in the bucket compared to the wealth of redibles that my mother and grandmothers produced each year. But our family too, looks forward to a bleak Sunday morning in January when one of the kids will go to the basement for a jelly jar or black raspberry jam. And as we spread it on a hot buttered a bagel it will remind us of the lushness of the past year and serve to assure us in spite of the snow and bitter cold, summer will come once again.



ALL IN THE FAMILY
Sarah Child

It was a tossup this morning as to whether I tackled the typewriter or the tomatoes. The typewriter won but only because I've already given top priority to the vegetables for the past week. Thus far I have 15 quarts of tomatoes, canned and another 12 quarts of green tomato relish stowed away on the metal shelves in the basement. There must be that many more to be processed if neither I nor my canning equipment give out.

There is something very satisfying about preserving food. In other years, my mom and both grandmothers "put up" hundreds upon hundreds of jars of vegetables, fruits, pickles, relishes, jellies and meats. Looking upon the row after row of mason jars gleaming from the wooden shelves in the cellar built especially to hold them was an experience.

Those shiny glass packed jars were evidence of many things: A bountiful God and rich harvest, of frugal and ambitious housewives, of knowledgeable gardeners who loved and knew how to tend the earth. Those jars of jewel-like fruit and vegetables submerged in heavy syrups and pungent brine were not just food put away for the winter. They were money in the bank, insurance against unforeseen emergencies, tangible proof that if the snow piled 10 feet high, the men lost their jobs or the nation's entire economic structure threatened to collapse as indeed it had, the families would not go hungry.

We children, of course, did not probe so deeply for meanings. The significance of those jammed shelves was as simple as bringing up whatever jar we were told for a particular meal and immediately reaping the benefits. It might have been dark red cherries for one of mom's golden browned lattice topped pies, chili sauce for the Sunday roast or my favorite, the smooth perfection of peach halves, firm, sweet and flavorful swimming in syrup and served with my mother's crusty homemade bread which she made twice a week.

CFM CONVENTION

Newark — Mr. and Mrs. James Govola diocesan heads of the Christian Family Movement (CFM) and parishioners of St. Michael's Church, were among the participants in the recent Area Four Convention of the organization in Altoona, Pa. Among the principal speakers at the convention was former detective David Toma.

It is distributed free, DiNieri points out, but "we hope that those who can afford a donation will give it. However, we are hesitant to attach a price for fear that someone who cannot afford to pay will be denied the benefits."

The most notable project in recent months has been the distribution of "Christian Meditation" cards as an alternative to Transcendental Meditation. The cards include spiritual messages which are changed periodically. A Courier-Journal story and advertisements produced a lively response of a couple of hundred requests for the cards, Griffin said.

League officials estimate that they have given away several thousand meditation cards, with requests coming from all over the diocese and throughout the United States.

There are mixed feelings about the loose ties binding members to the league, but DiNieri and Griffin focus on the positive changes it has brought about. Catholics were encouraged to attend Daily Mass, countless churches increased their number of Masses, and the league is now concentrating on leading Catholics towards better prayer lives.

Transitus Service

To commemorate the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, a traditional "transitus" service will be held at Holy Apostles Church at 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 3.

The "passing over" celebration will consist of First Solemn Vespers, with veneration of the relic of St. Francis, a candle-light procession and Benediction. The congregation will sing the plain-chant service in English and Latin. Everyone is invited, especially members of the Third Order of St. Francis, and of St. Dominic. The church is at 530 Lyell Ave., at Austin Street.

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