

# Church Music's Most Venerable Instrument

By Sr. Josepha Kennedy, SSI

The instrument preeminently suited for worship after the human voice remains the organ. In the last decade it has suffered like Gregorian Chant, a rather major eclipse. Many very impressive new churches are equipped with organs which would be inadequate in a living room. And many fine old pipe organs are suffering serious neglect in upkeep, repair and incompetent, not to say glorious, use.

But recently I heard of a suburban parish which raised and spent \$6,000 to restore its grand old pipe organ; \$800 for some minor repair and upkeep was spent on an institutional small organ. A pipe organ will be installed in Nazareth College's new Community Center's Interfaith Chapel. And each year Nazareth music department enrolls a few more organ majors. So, maybe we're seeing a renaissance of interest in that most majestic of instruments.

For years, many parishes were served by generous volunteers who had studied piano and who were pressed into service on the organ in an emergency situation. (Much as we have seen generous volunteers pitch into a guitar Mass on the bases of a few chords and much good will). The resemblances between organ and piano are obvious - black keys and white keys. But the resemblance stops right there. The combinations of sounds, the pedal keyboard (and the coordination it requires) and the various dynamic devices are all peculiar to the organ. Even the keyboard is subtly different, since a piano string continues to vibrate after the key is released, the air released into the pipe by an organ key or its electronic equivalent stops instantly on the release of the key. So piano "touch" and fingering have to be radically altered if the organ is not to sound choppy and disconnected.

But, beyond that, are we to remain forever a "deprived" people

when it comes to the great or even the good organ literature? May we not demand of our organ and organist a truly inspiring processional or recessional or a full palette of organ sound? Should the organist be expected to practice? Are hymn accompaniments all we ever get to hear of the organ?

But we can hardly blame an organist when the instrument he or she must play is a glorified harmonica. Some of the electronic instruments, it is true, are very equivalent in sound to a pipe organ; many are more appropriate to television or dinner club music. Even with a pipe organ, many an ingenious organist knows just which stops can be used safely and which are sour, non-sounding or whistlers! ASKING for steady upkeep for a pipe organ is often like asking the pastor for an Oriental rug in the choir loft, luxury beyond all expectations. But a pipe organ represents someone's initial investment of tens of thousands of dollars. What other property asset of a parish is so neglected?

I feel that a Liturgy Committee or a sub-committee of a Parish Council might well check on the type and condition of its organ. A small yearly sum will provide

tuning and upkeep service under contract (the Music Commission will provide information on reliable organ maintenance firms).

Restoring organs and organists to an important place in our liturgies should be a serious priority in the Diocese.

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## WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 10:2-16. (R1) Gen. 2:18-24. (R2) Hebr. 2:9-11

However one looks at it, the story of the creation of woman in Genesis is masterful. As late as the 19th century, so inferior was woman considered to man that women novelists, like Marian Evans, often assumed masculine pen names like George Eliot, in order to gain acceptance.

19th-century woman's position was demeaning. Imagine then, how much worse her position must have been 19 centuries before Christ. She was equated with chattel then. Even God's chosen people sanctioned polygamy, so unjust to women. That is why the biblical account of woman's creation, even though man-oriented, had to be inspired.

Man is described as created first (it was a man's world). He names all the animals (a sign of man's dominion over all things). But then the man, even though the world was for him a paradise, was lonely because alone! Of all the animals, there was no one like himself. Only then is the creation of woman described. She comes from man in some mysterious way (for he is asleep). But, coming from man, she is like him in nature that was the point! When man saw her, he became ecstatic. "Here is someone just like me: bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." She originated, not from man's head, for she was not to dominate him, nor from his feet, for he was not to walk all over her, but from his side - for she was to walk beside him, as his equal, as one closest to his heart.

In this age of ERA (the so-called Equal Rights Amendment), there is

a danger in our zeal for seeking equality for women of losing sight that man and woman, though equal, are fundamentally different - and that this difference is not man-made, but God-made, which is the other point to the creation story. These differences, however, are not antagonistic, but complementary. Men and women differ as the glass from the wine that fills it, as the violin from the bow that draws music from it. The Scripture expresses this beautifully when it describes the first marriage as two becoming one.

The religion of Lao-Tzu (founded at the time of the editing of Genesis, about 550 BC) reasserts the same truth. The Tao symbol of man and woman (yang-yin) is a circle divided, not by a straight line into two hemispheres, but by an undulating, S-shaped, line to indicate that man and woman form a unity, not by each contributing the same, but different qualities.

So truly individual, so excellent is woman, and so incomplete is man without her, that to attain her, man leaves father and mother, as Abraham left his country for the land of promise.

The biblical account of woman's creation, though beautiful, subordinates woman to man. It was Jesus who finally liberated woman from male attitudes. He is the only Man, who is the mediator of all mankind.

Jesus ended man's tyranny over woman. No longer could he divorce her. Moses had permitted this, because in a patriarchal society the father was absolute head of the clan. He could have executed with impunity a displeasing wife to marry another. In a world, divorce and polygamy had been tolerated to prevent murder. Jesus abrogated forever this unfair concession.

As we drift further and further from Christianity, women will suffer loss. Marriage involves God's own will, expressed in the complementarity of sexes. Divorce is an injustice not only to the abandoned partner, but to God Himself. Divorce has been the edge of the wedge prying open the door to artificial contraception and abortion. Our moral domestic ills will be solved only by a return to the indissolubility of marriage. Let no man separate what God has joined.

**SPECIAL RITES**  
St. Boniface Church will begin observing the First Fridays on Oct. 1 with a special 11 a.m. Mass; in addition to the 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Masses. Confessions will be heard on Thursdays from 4-5:30 p.m.  
Rosary and benediction will also be held on the First Sundays of the month beginning on Oct. 3.

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