

ALL IN THE FAMILY



Sarah Child

Mass had begun as usual Sunday before last. In the pews directly ahead of us three babies from different families were presenting a symphony of coos and cries and between the crescendoes and the allegro animato I heard Father say that the homily would be delivered just before the Holy Eucharist.

If he gave an explanation it was lost in the action around us and we settled down to following the mis-salettes.

The homily, when it came, was short and to the point. In most countries around the world, including our neighbor Canada, Holy Communion is received in the hand, communicants placing the Host in the mouth. The procedure, far from being innovative, had been followed for the first 800 years in the Church.

It is a far more sanitary method than having the priest place the Eucharist on the tongue of each individual particularly at this time of year when viruses run rampant through communities.

With gentle humor Father instructed us how to place the right hand under the left in a cupping manner to receive the Host and then while still in front of the priest to pick it up with the right hand and place it in the mouth.

Those who wished to continue

receiving it in the traditional way could, of course, do so. We were to remember that either way was right.

Out of the four communicants in our family three chose the new method, one stayed with the old. The ratio was just about reversed for the congregation from the observation of one neighbor.

Excited at the prospect I worried briefly that I might drop the Host but then realized that actually this was safer than Father trying to get the tiny disc past my teeth.

As the Host was placed in my hands I felt a sense of wonder and new joy well up. The act of taking and eating was more positive than simply receiving. It was moving from passive to active and in the process the routine had been broken forcing a new awareness.

"Take and eat; this is my body," said Jesus (Matthew 26:26) and after so many years of receiving our Lord in the traditional manner we had done just that. We took and we ate.

At home I opened the large dictionary to the word "take." Not counting the definitions which coupled the word with a preposition or adverb (such as "take for") there were 92 meanings. I had to go no further than the first one: Take 1. To get into one's hands.

Obviously in the months to come more people will "take and eat" while others will continue to opt for the traditional because it seems more right to them or like our 11-year-old and her friends worry that they might drop the Host or otherwise call attention to themselves.

But hopefully all of us will remain tolerant towards each other and the method each chooses to receive Our Lord.

CRS Denies Charge Of CIA Cooperation

New York [RNS] — The newly-appointed executive director of Catholic Relief Services, Bishop Edwin Broderick, has declared here that "at no time" did the U.S. bishops' aid and development agency assist any U.S. intelligence gathering efforts during the Vietnam war.

In addition, the former director of CRS in Vietnam from 1967 to 1971, Father Robert L. Charlebois, denied that food and clothing destined for Vietnamese refugees were misused in an effort to support the American military effort.

Both CRS officials commented on an article which appeared in the Dec. 17 issue of the National Catholic Reporter, lay-edited weekly. The article, described as an "assessment" of available facts about CRS relief efforts in Vietnam, focused on the alleged involvements of CRS with U.S. military and CIA operations during the war.

The NCR article, entitled "Christ's work — or the CIA's?", cited various allegations against CRS, including the charges that CRS supplied food and clothing indirectly to paramilitary groups and cooperated in a military program that displaced 3.5 million Vietnamese from their homes and put them in refugee camps.

"I understand from members of my staff that the charges made in the particular article are not new," the bishop said. "They have been made before and have been answered by CRS. In general, I believe the readers of the article should be made aware that CRS operations in Vietnam from the very beginning in 1954 to the forced termination of the program in 1975 were conducted with only one goal — to help as many of God's poor as

possible, to feed and clothe them and supply medical services to millions of families . . ."

"In accomplishing this," he added, "it was necessary for CRS to work cooperatively with whatever governments were involved. Without their logistical support, it would be utterly impossible for CRS to carry on any kind of effective relief program."

Bishop Broderick stressed, however, that "at no time did CRS knowingly act on behalf of any military intelligence agencies and if CRS reports and correspondence were used to supply any organization with intelligence information, then CRS was never aware of such procedures."

Father Charlebois, whose direction of CRS efforts in Vietnam bore the brunt of criticism in the NCR article, said that basically his job was "to feed the poor." He denied vehemently that CRS worked hand-in-glove with U.S. military forces in Vietnam by using supplies to remunerate Vietnamese para-military units and their families.

He also said "we have never shared any reports from the field with the military or CIA. If they had access to our reports, it was without our knowledge."

The Gary, Ind., diocesan priest, who now serves as CRS negotiator for government aid programs, said CRS was established in Vietnam through the Vietnamese Conference of Bishops and sought to aid people on the basis of need. He claimed he was sure that CRS had not given aid to Viet Cong (Communist) forces and their sympathizers.

Pointing out that the development of "anti-war sentiment" in the U.S. had no effect on CRS' efforts to aid the poor and needy, Father Charlebois acknowledged that food, clothing and medicine was given to the families of South Vietnamese soldiers as well as to refugees.

"We never asked questions regarding what side of the political question they were on. It was purely need," he stated.

St. Charles Fund Drive Over the Top in Pledges

Parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo Church, in Greece have pledged more than \$212,000 toward renovation of parish properties, Father L. John Hedges, pastor, reported last week.

far have exceeded the minimum goal by \$62,000. Co-chairing the committee are Richard Stillman and George Bunting.

Earlier, an equal number of women canvassed the neighborhood to obtain information from Catholics. More than 2,000 census forms were logged. This committee was headed by Mrs. Ruth Tracy and Mrs. Carolann Hassett.

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