

Insights in Liturgy

Acclaiming the Mysteries of Faith

By MARY LOU ANDRYCHUK

In the early 70s, I was working with a parish folk group which abounded with music resources and was fairly sensitive to its responsibilities as ministers of music to the worshipping community. We had been singing an Our Father which we thought everyone liked, until one day a regular member of the congregation approached me and inquired sincerely, "When are we going to start praying the Our Father again?"

It was not that they didn't "like" what they had been singing; they just didn't feel as though it was prayer any more. The result was that we discontinued singing it, for lack of a better musical version, and invited the congregation to pray it by recitation.

A fuller sense of sung prayer within the worshipping Church has been developing since those days. But for most of us the

concentration has been on auxiliary elements, that is, the common expansion of hymn repertoire, in favor of the more essential sung prayers of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the acclamations.

Referring to the earliest liturgical assemblies of the Church, Jungmann writes: "In liturgical action, the participation of the people was manifested especially by the fact that they did not merely listen to the prayers of the priest in silence, but ratified them by their acclamations."

And the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy calls them "shouts of joy which arise from the whole assembly as forceful and meaningful assents to God's Word and Action..."

These acclamations — Alleluia before the gospel, Holy, Holy, Holy in the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer, Memorial (or Anamnesis) central to it, and Amen concluding the eucharistic prayer, plus the

Doxology ("For the kingdom...") after the Lord's Prayer — enable us to express our faith at key moments in the celebration of Mass. By definition, acclamations are emphatic, significant; by nature, then, they should be rhythmically strong, melodically appealing and affirmative.

Parish musicians need to develop this core of liturgical music, and should know that many good settings exist beyond the meager offerings in paperback missals. Pelouquin has composed two settings that are especially good, "Lytic Liturgy" and "Mass of the Bells." Proulx's "A Festival Eucharist" is a fine example of rhythmically strong, melodically appealing music. Each of these (available from G.I.A.) contains all the acclamations plus other Mass parts, is written for congregation and SATB choir, and provides instrumental as well as organ scores.

Alleluia settings from hymns like "The Strife Is O'er" and Deiss' "Wonderful and Great" (World Library Pub.) can easily be sung in parts and accompanied by organ and/or other instruments.

Vermulst and Deiss (WLP) have strong settings of Holy, Holy, Holy which don't depend on harmony but are greatly enhanced by it. Weston Priory has a simple and reverent setting, which folk groups might like, but it does not really possess the depth and creative tension of authentic "acclamation." St. Louis Jesuits' (NALR) settings are more dynamic.

Roff (G.I.A.) has written settings for each of the Memorial acclamations which begin in unison and climax in SATB harmony — an effective way to support plus embellish congregational singing. In addition, NALR offers some very good memorials by Wise and Landry for the folk style. Rivers' "Anamnesis" (Stimuli, Inc.) is a powerful example of an uncomplicated melodic line which captures a sense of the reality of the paschal mystery through use of SATB, canonic form, and effective piano.

Amen's are plentiful in every form and style. The

important quality, as with all acclamations, is their deliberateness, not their speed.

Weston Priory also has a simple Our Father with a climactic Doxology that would be easy to harmonize. Other than those offered by GIA, good settings of the Our Father with emphatic doxologies are scarce.

With greater attention given to these primary responses (and no less care exerted by celebrants in their parts), liturgical assemblies can more firmly acclaim their faith in Christ's presence among them and grow more deeply rooted in their experience as Church.

Octet Plays At St. Ann's

The folks at St. Ann's Home and The Heritage last week were entertained by a group of Eastman School of Music students who have formed a woodwind octet. The group, under the baton of Peter Candela performed Beethoven's Rondino in E flat, and Mozart's Serenade.

Candela, a 1973 graduate of Aquinas Institute and a parishioner of St. Ambrose Church, organized the group, which includes Kevin Piccini, Jeff Graham, Beverly Curtis, Astrid Wistedt, Steve Landgren, Nancy Goodearl, Paul Girton, and Rachel Bonner, to play at senior citizen's residences.

The octet performed during the afternoon coffee hour last Saturday.

ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schoen of Brown Street celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last Sunday at a family dinner party at Barry's Restaurant. Mr. Schoen, who retired in 1952, was associated with his brothers in a Nash automobile dealership in Genesee Street. As summer residents of Braddock Heights on Lake Ontario since 1933, the Schoens are members of St. Mark's parish, as well as St. Peter and Paul. Their daughters are Mrs. Arthur Fromm, Miss Betty Schoen, Mrs. Donald O'Connell and Mrs. Ronald Thibault. There are seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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OPEN HOUSE An Open House will be held at camp on Sunday, June 12, 1977 from 2:00 to 6:00 P.M. The public is invited to tour the facilities and meet the staffs of both the boys' and the girls' encampments. Hot hamburgs and beverages are available. A demonstration of ballfield and waterfront activities will be given followed by a Liturgy at 5:00.

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