

Insights in Liturgy

Communion in the Hand

(Last week, the bishops of the United States voted to ask the Vatican for permission to distribute Communion in the hand, an option already granted in 53 countries. Following is a brief explanation of the practice written by the diocesan director for liturgy.)

The practice of the communicant receiving Holy Communion in the hand is not an unprecedented development in the liturgy of the Church. The early Church Fathers make several references in their homilies and writings that reflect that receiving Communion in the hand was the common practice. It was not until the eighth or ninth centuries that the practice of Communion in the hand gradually shifted to receiving Communion on the tongue. This development can be traced to a change in attitude. During this period Christians became increasingly conscious of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but at the same time did not fully appreciate the holiness of the individual baptized Christian. The faithful approached the Eucharist with a sense of humility and reverence, as was proper, but these sentiments developed into an exaggerated feeling of unworthiness. Thus, the manner of receiving Holy Communion was gradually transformed.

In our own time, the Church once again finds itself in a similar period of transition. With documents like "Memoriale Domini" (1969) and "Immensae Caritatis" (1973), the Church approved of both ways of receiving Communion in those countries where the local bishops feel the practice would be helpful to eucharistic faith and devotion. These documents require a two-thirds majority vote of each country's bishops before official approval of the practice can be granted; they also see a solid

catechesis on the Eucharist as a requirement for the introduction of the practice.

With the expected approval by the Vatican, it will be the local diocese's concern to provide such catechesis. The discussion about the options must also include the tradition of the Church and sound pastoral and theological principles.

First, Communion in the hand is not a matter of Catholic doctrine, since our Church teachings on the Eucharist allow for both practices. It is rather a matter of discipline, which, like all guidelines for behavior, is meant to help us. In the case of the manner of receiving Communion, the present Church discipline, which allows for both reception on the tongue and in the hand, seeks to enhance our devotion for and deepen our faith in the Eucharist.

Second, all creation has been called to sanctification and is, in fact, sanctified in the birth of Christ. We, too, share in this sanctification by our initiation into Christ through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The entire person reaches out to God with praise and thanks. Thus, if we are in Christ, it is consistent with our Christian dignity to choose whether we will receive Holy Communion in our hands or on our tongues: both are equally valid and dignified.

Third, the manner of receiving Communion is a symbolic gesture which expresses our interior disposition. These external gestures can and have changed from time to time and from place to place. The reception of Communion expresses our spirit of giving and receiving, our affirmation of faith, conviction and commitment, and our desire to have our growth nourished by the Bread of life. The gesture that individual Christians decide upon — and the choice is theirs — should reverently reflect the reality in which they are par-

ticipating, and be a symbol received by the whole community of a faithful, active participation in this most central of Christian mysteries.

Hunger Communities Meet

Hunger Task Forces, representing several denominations from the Rochester area, will meet for an all-day workshop June 18 at Hobart College, Geneva. The purpose of the workshop is to learn about the other hunger programs, and to exchange new ideas and resources, according to a release from the hunger community.

The Rev. Norman Faramelli will be guest speaker during the afternoon session and will speak on "Energy and Food: Power and Nourishment." Father Faramelli, an Episcopal priest, currently serves as director of Environmental Control for the Boston Port Authority. He is a consultant to the Episcopal Church on World Hunger and is now engaged in research on energy and food production.

Registrations for the workshop, beginning at 10 a.m., are due at the Episcopal Diocesan House, 935 East Ave., by June 12.

AUTHORITIES DUE

Two nationally known authorities in the field of business education, Herbert Conover, chief of the Bureau of Business Education, New York State Department of Education, and Mary Nemesh, coordinator of Business and Office Education, Anne Arundel County Board of Education, Annapolis, Md., will teach this summer in Nazareth College's new graduate program in Business Education.

More Opinions

Must Keep The Canal

I would like to bring to light some information concerning the Panama Canal issue which I feel has been too often overlooked and is certainly pertinent.

Before Lenin's death in 1924 he set down a plan of conquest for his followers. It has been paraphrased and summarized as follows: "First, we will take eastern Europe. Next, the masses of Asia. Then we shall encircle that last bastion of capitalism, the U.S.A. We shall not have to attack; it will fall like over-ripe fruit into our hands."

At the time Lenin spoke these words, many would have thought this to be laughable if not ridiculous. Yet consider our situation today. We have communism only 90 miles from our shores, and in South America, socialism in Canada and Mexico, and last but not least the Marxist government in Panama headed up by Gen. Omar Torrijos who came to power by military coup in 1968. It appears obvious that the U.S. is being encircled step by step, piece by piece, with the Panama Canal being one of, if not the last step.

The Panama Canal and the Zone is and always has been since its completion in 1914 a very valuable piece of property in terms of the costs the U.S. incurred in the acquisition and building of the canal and its continued maintenance. But much more significant is its tremendous strategic and economic importance to the U.S. The canal is a very valuable and prized pearl and a necessary conquest for the Communists to cripple the economy of the U.S. and strategically weaken our naval power.

There is absolutely no doubt that the canal zone is

of special interest to the Soviet Union as stated by former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Zumwalt who recently gave his judgment that the Soviet Union has replaced the U.S. as the number one naval power in the world.

Current arguments in favor of a new treaty (ditching our sovereignty) continually expound the rhetoric that it's necessary to preserve peace. Let us examine the situation. We have a tin-horn Marxist dictator in charge of a country of 1.5 million people, virtually no army, no navy, no weapons of comparative military force of any kind, who has repeatedly threatened the U.S. with "battle" if a new treaty is not resolved. This is absurd by anyone's definition of the word. The reason Gen. Torrijos is making so many waves is that he is taking his orders from the Kremlin and he knows from past example he can count on our chief negotiators to cooperate with him and betray the best interests of the American people.

There is a simple solution to the problem, however, and it consists of:

- 1. Stop all negotiations.
2. Defend the Canal Zone.
3. Reaffirm sovereignty.

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Bishops Seen Courageous

One of Jesus' many attributes was courage. It took a good deal of courage to oppose the status quo in those days, but he did. It takes some courage to

oppose the status quo in our Church today, and, evidently, about a third of our Bishops did not have it when they voted against "Communion in the hand."

But, thank God, many of our bishops do have that Jesus-like courage.

Two, among many, come to mind vividly: our own Bishop Joseph Hogan for his support of the Call to Action and his openly stated position on the ordination of women in the face of "No Women Priests;" and the Bishop of Memphis, Carroll Dozier, for his most loving ceremony of general reconciliation.

These two give hope and courage to those of us who have become discouraged by the Church's failure to respond to the spirit of Vatican II.

Adolphe and Loe d'Audiffret
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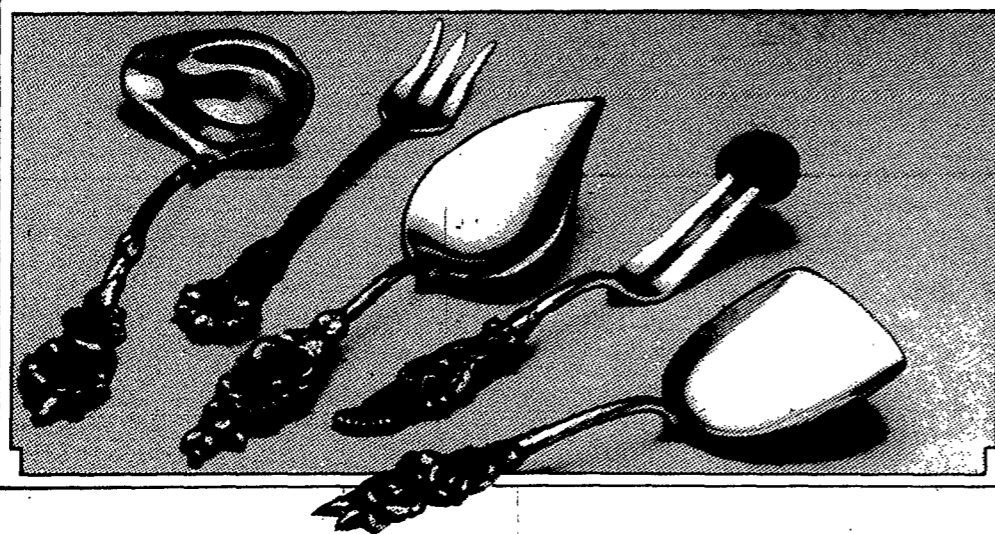
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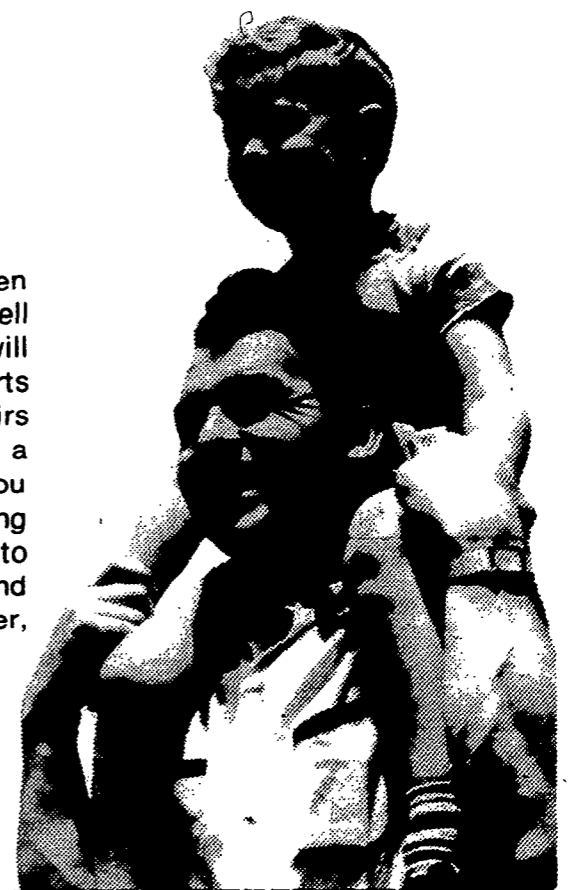


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