

Insights in Liturgy

Part I: Timely Prayer

By DAVID E. NOWAK

Since the Second Vatican Council, parish liturgical renewal has focused sharply, and not without some notable success, upon restoring the celebration of the Eucharist. However, one unfortunate effect of this emphasis has been to produce a great majority of Christians who do not regularly attend any other liturgical service.

Many contemporary Christians for whom the Eucharist is their regular act of public worship question both the need and the desirability of additional forms of liturgical prayer: if one Mass is good, two are better.

It often seems that whenever Roman Catholics want to pray they must have a Mass. Not only does this ignore other forms of worship within our tradition, but many Catholics can't imagine that it is possible to solemnize anything without doing it in the context of the Eucharist. And it is lately being asked whether this almost exclusive use of the eucharist for any and all public worship might signal the trivialization of our primary form of liturgical prayer.

The desirability of alternate, complementary forms of public worship is fundamental. There are strong theological and psychological grounds for supposing that a pattern of public worship which is to all intents and purposes restricted to the eucharist is unbalanced and inadequate.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that our liturgical forms must preserve the theological and psychological tension between creation and redemption, between "this-worldly" and "other-worldly", between the significance of time and the significance of eternity. Yet, by restricting our liturgical prayer to the eucharist, we have excluded the concept of "time" from our public worship.

The Eucharist celebrates eschatological time. It is the eighth day, the final revelation, a foretaste of our heavenly glory. In contrast, we need a celebration of created time. We need a liturgy which recognizes time redeemed and made holy in Jesus, but expresses the "not yet" quality of our journey as a pilgrim people.

It is psychologically necessary to reflect and enhance the "natural" rhythms of life in our patterns of public ritual. And it is theologically necessary that this should be done in the context of

LEGION MASS

Bishop Dennis W. Hickey will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. April 9 for members of the Streb-Lappan-Klem American Legion Post. The annual communion breakfast will follow. Both Mass and breakfast will be in the Knights of Columbus rooms at Thurston and Brooks.

Christian worship.

Further, a pattern of worship which excludes a "liturgy of Time" not only fails to provide for certain basic psychological needs within the context of redemption, but even for practical reasons is unable to make full use of richly significant scriptural and liturgical elements.

In short, devotional impoverishment is unavoidable without additional liturgical forms carefully designed to provide a balanced and adequate expression of the mystery of our faith.

The traditional form of this liturgy of "time" complementing the liturgy of the Eucharist, is the Liturgy of the Hours. This prayer in the name of Christ and in Christ is rooted in the

experience of time. The Liturgy of the Hours sanctifies time in an unending sacrifice of praise to our God (Heb. 13:15).

These hours of prayer are intimately related to our experience of time. Here we celebrate those passover moments within the normal cycle of life which recall our true identity in Jesus awaiting the final Passover with Him to the Father.

It was in time that the revelation of God took place in Jesus, and it is in time that God continually reveals himself. Without a liturgy of time, without the Liturgy of the Hours, time will be lost, as it were, as a sacrament of revelation.

Next Week: Part II - The Praying Church.



CYO Champs

CYO Eastern Division girls champs are the players on St. Rita's Basketball team which ended the season with a 9-0 record. In front row from left are: Sr. Mary Jogues, coach; Barbara Marcoux, Julie Aspender, Kathy Blickwede, Beth Buddendeck. Back row: Sue Rinere, Kerry Flanagan, Lori Campanella, Janice Jaskulski, Theresa Hahn, Sue Smith.

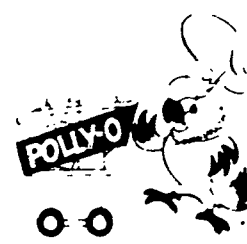
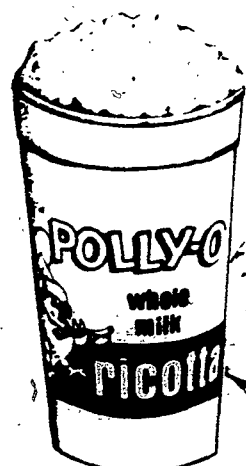
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