

Silver Jubilee

Brother Brendan Croston, FMM, will celebrate his silver jubilee as a member of the Brothers of Mercy on May 20, 1978. Most Rev. Bernard J. McLaughlin, auxiliary bishop of the Buffalo diocese will celebrate Mass at 11 a.m. at the Sacred Heart Home in Clarence, N.Y. Dinner for friends and relatives will follow.

Brother Brendan is a graduate of Holy Rosary and Aquinas Institute in Rochester. He studied at Canisius College, Mercy Hospital, Buffalo, and Rockhurst College in Kansas City, Mo. Brother Brendan, presently stationed in Clarence, is the son of Mrs. Nora Croston, of Holy Rosary parish, and the late George Crostan.

Insights in Liturgy

By FATHER ROBERT KENNEDY

Our Adaptable Liturgy

Do you remember being told in your religious formation that you could go into any Catholic church in the world and find exactly the same Mass that was celebrated in your parish? This unity of practice -- to the extent that it was a unity -- was source of great pride because it was a sign of the one Church.

Well, the same thing could be taught today, although it would have a different meaning. With the reform of the liturgy, our unity is not so much based on external elements as on the interior faith of God's People that is expressed, nourished and deepened in liturgical celebrations. We are one because of the faith we profess in the saving death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the

liturgy of every age enables God's People to celebrate that faith to the fullest extent possible.

Thus, in revising the liturgy, the Second Vatican Council and the Commissions entrusted with the revision were more concerned about the liturgical acts as a whole and their pastoral effect for the people. The rites were meant to create the mystical union of God and his people. Thus, there was needed a liturgy that could be adapted to the faith, spiritual needs and culture of the particular worshipping community.

Rubrics were no longer a fixed set of external elements meant to be observed in every detail under pain of mortal sin. Rather, the rubrics became the limits within which the rites could be adapted so as to be pastorally effective. Options for the various elements of the rites were built into the revision so

that the worshipping community could find an adequate expression of its praise, and gratitude, and faith.

What principles should be used in the adaption of the liturgical rites to the worshipping community? What directions will guide the correct choice of options? These may help:

(1) It is the priest, TOGETHER WITH the celebrating community, that is responsible for the correct performance of the rites and the sacramental union with God they are meant to create. This arises from the nature of the liturgy as action of the whole Body of Christ, Head and members, each one taking his or her proper role and all participating as fully and as actively as possible.

(2) Understand the meaning of the rites. They are the skeleton form of our prayer and what gives us unity in worship as a Church. Each element and rite should be understood for what it is and how it fits into the whole. It will then be much easier for the "dry bones" of the liturgical rites to take on

the flesh and spirit of the people's faith and prayer.

(3) Know your worshipping community. If the liturgy is to unite God and his People, to nourish and deepen their faith, to express their worshipful praise, then the priest and planning committee must know the congregation's spiritual needs, hopes, depth of faith and experiences of life in God. This is a critical point if the proper selection of options is to be made.

(4) There is a need for liturgical forms to grow and develop since the liturgy manifests the mystery of the Church, which is a living, growing body. Out of the treasury of the scripture and tradition of the Church, the liturgy constantly renews itself to be the expression of God's People in the present time.

(5) The liturgy must be catholic (universal), but this is a two-edged sword. For while the liturgy is adapted to the varieties of culture and situations, it also remains intimately linked with the whole Church in its unity of faith and authority.

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Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Truly Seeing God

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 3:16-18. (R1) Ex. 34:4-6, 8-9. (R2) 2 Cor. 13:11-13.

If a child were to Fr. Shamon define his parents, or a husband his wife, or a wife her husband, how would they do it? Would they use definitions? Or would they use descriptions, telling what each meant to the other?

Whenever I talk of my deceased mother, I never use a definition. I simply describe her. "She was beautiful to look at," I generally say. "So gentle, tender, concerned. She was always home when we wanted her. Always had time to listen to us

and advise us. She was good and always wanted us to be good," and so on. I too could write a book entitled I Remember Mama. And it also would not be all about my personal experiences of "mama."

Well, that is the way. Scripture speaks of God. It describes the personal experiences of people with Him. Only the late theologians defined God in the abstraction of trinity.

Moses, for instance, experienced God not as a truth about whom he had to be informed, but as a living person present to him in everyday life. He knew God as "merciful and gracious." (R1) Why merciful and gracious? Because God had actually freed the Hebrews from the cruel fate of Egyptian slavery. As "slow to anger." Why slow to anger? In Egypt God had sided with the Hebrews against the Pharaoh, and at the Red Sea He had

swallowed up the pursuing Egyptian army-- and yet scarcely three days later, after all these divine interventions in their behalf, these same people murmured against God, for lack of water in the desert. And God, instead of blasting these ingrates into nothingness, sweetened the bitter waters at Marah for them. Moses saw him "rich in kindness and fidelity." Why rich in kindness? Because he and the people ate manna, bread from heaven, provided by God. When again they needed water, He gave it to them from flinty rock. Why rich in fidelity? When the Amalekites sought to thwart their journey, He crushed them through the sword of Joshua. In a word, for Moses and Israel, God was not known by definitions, but by experience-- as Someone traveling with them, as Someone always there, caring, helping, patient and kind.

In the Gospel this same God incarnated His love: He took human hands to heal, a human heart to love, a human mouth to speak peace. "God so

loved the world that He gave His only Son." (R3) He did not define His love. He loved, as all lovers do, by giving, not something very precious, but Someone eternally loved by Himself: His own Son. This may not be as impressive as a theological treatise on the Incarnation or Trinity. But treatises depersonalize God, make Him distant, aloof, cold-- Someone nobody could get very excited about or much involved with.

Thus even when God's Son left the earth, He gave His Holy Spirit a visible community to dwell in, the Church. Those who believe in Jesus enter this community, and the Spirit of God enables them to live in harmony and peace, encouraging one another. (R2)

Through this interpersonal experience, they (and we) can get to know God far better than by definition or theological speculation.

See God in our daily lives, as did the people of Scripture, and we shall truly "see" God.

Parish to Fete Retiring Pastor

The people of St. Rita's in West Webster are planning a dinner for Father Francis A. Kleehammer, their pastor for 28 years. The party is scheduled for Thursday, June 8, at Sweet's Party House, and everyone is invited.

Father Kleehammer, founding pastor of the parish, will retire June 28, just 18 days after the 45th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

May 31 is the deadline for reservations, which may be made with Mrs. Robert Lanson, 671-5640; Mrs. Frank La Force, 671-5955, or Mrs. Harold Peiffer, 671-6278.



FR. KLEEHAMMER

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