

Insights in Liturgy

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Eucharistic Practices: A Review

The recent celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi necessarily calls our attention to the centrality of the Eucharist in our lives as Christians. We gather together around the Lord's Table each week to offer praise and thanks for the many gifts we have received and to be nourished by his Body and Blood - the greatest source of grace and strength we have in this life.

The following may serve as incentives for congregations and ministers to reflect upon and evaluate the ways in which we express ourselves as a Eucharistic Community.

THE CELEBRATION: Perhaps the most dramatic change that flowed from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963), was the celebration of Mass in the vernacular, with the priest facing the congregation. The term "Mass facing the people" has been used in countless articles and talks about the changes in the liturgy. Yet already it seems that the term is outdated. Today we are called to see the Eucharist as a celebration in the midst of the congregation with various men and women ministering through prayer, word, song and service. Mass is not a private ex-

perience of the priest alone with an observing congregation. We are celebrating the presence of Christ within the fabric of our lives, and we gather around his table as sisters and brothers - equals - a people who hunger for the Bread of Life. That presence - that celebration is hidden when the presiding minister acts as though it were "his" Mass alone, and when the congregation ignores the call to participate as members of our Baptismal Priesthood!

BREAD: It is always an educational experience to talk with children who are preparing to receive Communion for the first time. After explaining that Communion is the Bread of Life and talking about the Last Supper, usually one of the students will say "It doesn't look like bread to me!" Well, those flat white hosts don't look like bread to me either! As our appreciation of the Eucharist has grown over the years many more people come to the Lord's Table to be nourished. We should strive to provide communion bread that looks like real bread - bread that is familiar to our culture. We would do well to introduce this bread to our children and to educate our adults, helping them to see that real bread can become Eucharist - bread blessed and broken.

WINE: Recently the bishops of the United States approved the sharing of the cup at Sunday Eucharist.

This decision was not made without a great deal of discussion and study. Certainly this change is an attempt to deepen the meaning of the Eucharist for the Church today. Parish liturgy committees should study possible ways of following the directives of our Bishops in this matter. Those who think the matter is unimportant might reflect on the following. If receiving communion from the cup is unimportant, then it is logical to say that receiving communion in the form of bread is unimportant. Christ gave us himself in the form of bread and wine: "This is my body . . . This is my blood . . . Do this in memory of me."

SPECIAL MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST: The role of the Special Minister of the Eucharist is one which continuously needs renewal and growth within our communities. With the authorization of the laity to distribute the Eucharist a new witness of service and unity, was established within the universal Church. The limitations to this ministry are few. Candidates should be at least 18 years of age. It is a ministry to be exercised by both men and women. Candidates who are called forth to serve the community in this way should be devoted to the Eucharist, and after a period of preparation (offered by our Liturgy Office) they should be commissioned in the presence of the community. Their names should also be forwarded to the bishop. An occasional bulletin article or homily on this ministry would be a good way to remind the community of

this beautiful ministry and to call forth new ministers.

COMMUNION TO THE SICK: The presence of special ministers of the Eucharist not only provides a service to the worshipping community in the Church, but also offers those members of the parish who are confined to home, hospitals or nursing homes the opportunity to share in the Eucharist which was shared by the larger community. These special ministers and their families should be called forth from the community during the communion rite and sent out to minister to the sick and shut-ins in the name of the whole community.

COMMUNION IN THE HAND: This is a relatively new practice in the United States, and it is one which needs to be explained periodically to the community and the ministers. Encourage the faithful to receive the bread with reverence. Remind the ministers to establish some eye contact with the person receiving communion. Remember that touch is an important part of this style of receiving the Eucharist. Don't be afraid to touch the hand of the minister or receiver in the act of sharing the Bread of Life.

No one should be forced to receive communion in the hand or on the tongue. Forcing children to receive communion on the tongue at first communion is wrong. First communicants and parents should be taught both methods of receiving communion. Our explanations should foster a love for the sacrament and a feeling of comfort in receiving it.

THE TABERNACLE: The tabernacle is a place of reservation of the Eucharist which is present for the spiritual comfort and nourishment of the sick, and for private Eucharistic devotion of the faithful. The tabernacle is not meant to be a storehouse for communion which is distributed at Mass. Enough bread and wine should be consecrated for the faithful at each Mass. The symbol of being fed by the food from the Lord's Table is more evident if this practice is followed.

In summary, our celebrations of the Eucharist are meant to nourish and inspire the worshipping community. For this to take place ministers and congregation need to see themselves as people gathered around the one table as sisters and brothers - gathered together to celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy - " . . . the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed . . . the fountain from which all her power flows." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, para 10).

Missioner Celebrates Fortieth

Father Bertrand Hodes, OFM, a missioner in Costa Rica for the past 33 years, celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination on June 3, his brother, Joseph Hodes of Weaver Street, reported.

Father Hodes is from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. He attended grammar school there and after six years at St. Andrew's Seminary joined the Franciscans. He completed his studies in Syracuse and Albany and was ordained June 3, 1939, in Albany. On the following day, he said his First Mass at OLPH. He was assigned to Costa Rica in 1946.

In addition to Joseph Hodes, the priest has two other brothers, Bernard and Richard, and a sister, Mrs. Mary Blanchard, in this area.

40th Jubilee Celebrated

A family reception was held in Penfield recently to honor Msgr. Harold Prendergast, a Rochester native, who celebrates this year the 40th anniversary of his priesthood for the diocese of Peoria, Ill.

Msgr. Prendergast studied at Sacred Heart Grammar School, Aquinas Institute, and St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's Seminaries. He was ordained for Peoria on May 18, 1939. He was granted the title of monsignor in 1970 by Pope Paul VI.

He has two sisters in this area, Mrs. Leo Flynn of

Irondequoit and Mrs. Walter Zehder of Penfield. His brother, George, lives in Cape Vincent and Venice, Fla. Msgr. Prendergast also has several nieces and nephews living in this area.

Day Camp

Genesee Settlement House at 10 Dake St. is enrolling children ages 6 through 12 in its Day Camp Fisher during the hours 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Later times may be arranged. Further information is available at 288-1830.

WHEC-TV 10 IS PROUD TO PRESENT:

The Installation of Bishop Matthew H. Clark Live From the War Memorial on Tuesday, June 26 at 7:30 P.M.

Co-anchored by TV 10 Reporters Andrea Nissen and David Nolan

Commentary by Monsignor William Shannon and Father Kenneth Doyle

Organizations who donated for this special event include:

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