



Christmas Stamp

The Holy Family resting on the way to Egypt is the subject of a new Christmas stamp introduced by its designer, Bradbury Thompson, during ceremonies in Washington, D.C. (RNS).

The Church 1979

By Father Andrew Greeley

Ordinary People, Big Results

What do you say when the fellow who has written your biography writes the biography of somebody else and it's a much better book?



I can think of a number of explanations for the excellence of John Kotre's new book, "Simple Gifts" (Andrews and McMeel). First of all I could kid myself by saying that Professor Kotre has matured as a writer. Surely, such an observation would be valid. "Simple Gifts" marks his definitive arrival as one of the most skillful interpreters of contemporary American Catholicism, a man whom the American church simply has to take seriously.

I could also say that "Simple Gifts" is a much more personal biography than "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times," his book about me, which is a more intellectual biography.

But, I guess, the simple truth about "Simple Gifts" is that Pat and Patty Crowley are far more interesting people than I was, or am, or ever will be. Kotre's biography of them provides a much more interesting prism to view the changes in American Catholicism since 1950. It is a warm, sensitive, honest, intelligent portrait, and those who belong in the Christian Family Movement (CFM), or grew up in CFM families ought not to miss Kotre's portrait of two "ordinary" people who did extraordinary things, and in retrospect turned out not to have been ordinary at all.

Back in the late 1950s, when my generation were "young priests," CFM seemed to be the most exciting and dynamic thing that was going on in the church—the best thing since the seventh sacrament was

instituted," said one of my classmates. It was an extraordinary phenomenon. It is safe to say that in the good sense of the word the Crowleys were "whole soul." Their energy and imagination, vision and down-to-earth humanity provided the basic drive that went into the CFM.

Sociologically speaking it was the right movement at the right time, growing just as the new post-World War II, Catholic, suburban middle-class was appearing on the scene. CFM was the church's first response to the changing social and economic situation of the Catholic family. It was an immense success.

One can be melancholy when one reads "Simple Gifts" and say what a tragedy that the full promise of CFM was never achieved. As Kotre notes, "One encyclical ignited CFM in 1943, another came close to snuffing it out a quarter of a century later." From the enthusiasm of "Mystici Corporis" to the despair which followed "Humanae Vitae," many things changed in the church. But I would prefer to say that CFM did achieve much of its promise and then was transmuted to other forms and dynamisms that continue to flourish in the church. Patty Crowley can look back on an extraordinary movement, which within its own context was a spectacular success.

Kotre's book is not hagiography. The mistakes as well as the successes, the failures as well as the achievements, are all carefully chronicled. From the founding of the CFM to the ill-fated birth control commission and after, Patrick and Patricia Crowley symbolized and represented some of the finest impulses in American Catholicism. John Kotre's story of their life and work is moving, compassionate and perceptive. It is a chapter in the American Catholic story (and the Chicago story), of which we all may be justifiably proud.

Tobin in New Post, Replaced by Davitt

Albany — The State Catholic Conference, action arm of the state's Catholic bishops, has created the position of general counsel and secretary and has named its long-time executive director, Charles J. Tobin Jr.,

to the post. J. Alan Davitt has been named to succeed Tobin as executive director.

In his new position, Tobin will be responsible for legal



TOBIN



DAVITT

affairs and for the activities of the Administrative Board of Bishops, the governing body of the conference.

of the conference. They became effective Nov. 1.

Tobin has been executive director for 25 years.

Davitt has been with the conference for 12 years in educational affairs, as executive secretary for the Councils of Catholic School Superintendents and Directors of Religious Education. He has been assistant conference director for the same period.

The appointments were announced by Cardinal Terence Cooke, Archbishop of New York City, president

Will Bishops Delete 'Men' from Prayers?

Washington (RNS) — The nation's Catholic bishops will consider removing so-called "sexist language" from liturgical prayers when they meet here for their annual convention Nov. 12-15.

Removal of the wording, particularly from the Eucharistic prayer said during Mass, is being considered for two reasons: to remove an unintended offense and to conform more accurately with the original Latin.

The proposal is being presented as a report from the seven-member bishops committee on the liturgy, chaired by Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee.

The action is being taken to "facilitate the full and active participation of the entire assembly in all liturgical actions," said William Ryan, a spokesman for the U.S. Catholic Conference.

"It is a fact that some members of our eucharistic assemblies feel excluded or alienated from the prayer of the church by the words addressed to God or the community by one who

presides, even though this is not intended," the committee said in its report. "Whatever can be done to alleviate any hurt or feeling of alienation of a large segment of the assembly must be undertaken."

The major change is that the word "men" will be deleted from the Eucharistic prayer. The prayer at Mass presently says, Christ's blood was "shed for you and for all men." The new version would read "shed for you and for all."

Second, the revisions would allow the celebrant to substitute an inclusive word or phrase in prayers in which "the generic term 'man' or its equivalent is found."

A two-thirds majority, or 220 of the 330 bishops, must approve the proposal and then it must also be approved by the Vatican before the change can be incorporated.

Resolutions favoring this action have been passed by the Canon Law Society, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions and the National Coalition of American Nuns.

NCCW: Ordain Women Deacons

Washington — In the continuing discussion of ordination of women to the priesthood, the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW), has urged that women rally around an alternative proposal: to ordain women as deacons.

In a position paper on "Women in the Church," the 10 to 14 million member NCCW, through its executive committee, has offered to work with other women in the Church "in seeking to open wider ministries for women."

The paper, prepared under the leadership of Bette Hillemeier, NCCW's president, accepts the 1976 Vatican declaration closing the priesthood to women but notes that the declaration leaves open the question of women as deacons. The paper states: "We support the proposal to examine the feasibility of establishing the diaconate for women."

Meanwhile, in Chicago, S. Thomas Greenburg, a spokesman for the Institute on Religious Life, an affiliation of 90 women's religious communities, again tackled the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) for the statements made by Sister Theresa Kane, president, to Pope John Paul II at the

National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. At that time, Sister Theresa publicly asked the pontiff to consider opening the priesthood to women.

Shortly after, Greenburg challenged the LCWR to reveal whether women's ordination was a policy of the organization. In a telephone interview last week, Greenburg told the Courier Journal that he had not received a communication back from the LCWR.

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