

The Open Window

By Father Louis J. Hohman

'Et Homo Factus Est'

Dear Father Hohman,

As a regular reader of The Open Window, I have read and reread your Nov. 28 column several times and still fail to understand the point you are trying to make.



The question you pose — "What causes the Bishops of the United States to refuse to remove sexist language from various parts of the liturgy?" — seems to indicate that you are disturbed by the presence of sexist language in the liturgy and the failure of the bishops to remove it.

Then you go on to say that the word men as used in the liturgy is not a masculine term and you further state that "there is no masculine designation in any of the uses of the word man in the liturgy except when they refer to the Lord Jesus as masculine or some other masculine person." Then you indicate that you can't

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Science Award

Sister Kathleen Maloney SSJ has received a Rochester Academy of Science award for her original research entitled "A cytological study of the flower, Monotrope Uniflore (Indian Pipe)." Grace L. Murray announced the award on behalf of the academy.

Sister Kathleen is a student of Prof. Alfred F. Finocchio at St. Bonaventure University.

TV Special

A one-hour special program on Mother Teresa, the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize winner, will be broadcast over WHEC-TV, Channel 10, beginning at 8 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 13.

understand why they (the bishops) are doing this.

Just what is it they are doing or not doing? The way I interpret your remarks is that you begin in advocating that sexist language be eliminated from the liturgy; then you go on to prove that there is none there anyway and conclude by calling for its elimination. How can you remove what is not there in the first place?

I enjoy The Open Window very much, and its occasional or rather too frequent absence is a disappointment. As one of "the old school" I do not always agree with your views, but they are certainly stimulating and thought-provoking. My wife and I have some lively discussions over them. God bless you, Father, and keep the window open.

(Signed) P.G.

Dear P.G.,

I will try to answer your

questions as you raised them in your letter. Yes, I am disturbed by the presence of sexist language in the liturgy because a large number of our people are disturbed. They are convinced that sexist words give the impression that this is a male-oriented or at least male-dominated Church. They feel that psychologically this engenders in the minds of people an orientation toward that male domination. At I agree with them.

Yes, I am disturbed by the failure to remove sexist language because it would be such a simple matter and if it is so disturbing to so many of our people, it just seems to me there is a kind of insensitivity to that hurt.

What I was saying about masculine designations has to do not with the English language but rather with Latin. In the Latin language the word for human person is homo and the word for a masculine human person is vir. Those differences do not show up in the English language, and what is the best word we have at the moment for human is also the designation for a masculine human, namely, man. However, with a little

ingenuity we can simply remove the masculine designation and replace it with an expression like human being, or all, or all people, or whatever we want to do. I admit that it is a little bit awkward, but better

awkward than offensive to some of our people.

So what I am asking for is a change in the English language. There is no need for a change in the other languages, particularly the Latin. The Latin reads in the

Creed, "et homo factus est" — and he was made a human being; although we sometimes translate it "he was made man." I hope through this example you will see the difference in the two.

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CCJ

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