

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

On Liturgy And Music

A man wrote this:

What gives? Recently I went to a flamboyant Mass which gave me the chills. One angry woman called it "a liturgical extravaganza," another, "a disco Mass."

Response:

There are several schools of thought on what is good liturgy for the Mass. However, you are touching a sensitive nerve, since Catholic liturgy frequently is under the direction of delicate people, who persist in presenting things meaningfully, according to their lights.

Meaningful to whom?

I suppose if a liturgist is a bit arty, he thinks his presentation is good for everybody. It's hard for him to comprehend the sentiments of the normal truck driver who prefers beer and football to ballet and Picasso; or the hardworking mothers who strain to meet family budgets for food and clothing; or virile boys and energetic girls who bounce balls about, lead cheers for the team, and enjoy the animal spirits of adolescence. These youngsters and mothers and truck drivers might even enjoy a bit of disco dancing and din, but at disco hangouts, not in the holy church. The fact is that few American Catholics through 25 years of age have experienced the glorious music of the Catholic Church, or the popular hymns which were a part of our Catholic inheritance.

But didn't Vatican II direct that the great music be preserved?

Yes. But those who took over the music mostly disregarded the directives. The Decree on Sacred Liturgy from Vatican II is clear: "The treasury of sacred music is to be preserved and cultivated with great care. Choirs must assiduously be developed. . . Great importance is to be attached to the teaching and practice of music in seminaries. . . and in other Catholic institutions and schools. . ." A 1967 Instruction on the Liturgy, evidently because of liturgical hanky-panky in many places, insists: "Regulation of the Sacred Liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church. Therefore, no person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority. . . All should bear in mind St. Paul's admonition — 'For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.' (1 Cor. 14)" (Second Instruction: May, 1967)

Do you feel strongly about the common cup?

Would you want to drink out of a common dipper hanging from a drinking pump in a public park, as we had in our Clyde park 40 years ago? Yes, I do, for hygienic reasons as well as

for reasons of reverence. Irreverence was the original reason for dropping the use of the common chalice for the laity. An article in Priest magazine, advocating the common cup, says that tests show there is little danger from germs if the lip of the cup is wiped carefully before the cup is passed on. The author assures us that the only two diseases possible to contract from the moist chalice are mumps and syphilis. Not a cheerful thought. For centuries our people have been content with Communion under the one form of bread. And Pope John Paul II seems content, from what we observe. But of course he is getting his lumps from a determined core of antagonists within the Church.

What do you think of liturgy in our diocese?

Most of it seems rather good, excepting the continual suppression of our musical heritage. The pioneer liturgist, of course, was Father Benedict Ehmann, who I think has been too little used, to the loss of the diocese. Our present head liturgist is Father Kennedy, who is not over-delicate, and who I hope will extend "the peace and tranquility" to laity as well as clergy from his study of sacramental guidelines. If liturgists had been faithful to the documents of Vatican II and subsequent directives, the uneasiness of the people would have been avoided.



Chief organizers of the Kearney Mothers Club fashion show are (standing l-r) Barbara Kelly of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and June Baker of St. Salome's. Student models shown are Donna Dedee and Kris Lyons.

Fashion Show Set

Bishop Kearney High School students and their mothers and grandmothers will model a variety of clothes Tuesday evening, March 18, at the school, 125 Kings Highway S. The "80's Lady" fashion show, sponsored by the Mothers Club, opens at 8 p.m.

A limited number of tickets for this school benefit will be offered at the door. Meanwhile, all the students have tickets for sale, and reservations may be made also by calling 266-9337 or 342-8441.

Margaret Graham-Smith of TV Channel 10 will be the commentator. Shops providing the style show are Casual Corner Midtown, Altier's, Irondequoit Bridal Fashions, Tuxedo Junction and Michele & Co., Hairdressers.

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