



Waiting Patiently

Toni Sickmann, of Krakow, Mo., mother of U.S. Marine Rodney V. Sickmann, one of the 50 hostages being held in the American Embassy in Teheran, displays her faith and patriotism as she smiles from a decorated window of her home. She plans to leave the Christmas touches in place for a delayed celebration when her son returns home. (RNS)

Insights in Liturgy

Musical Priorities

By Sister Nancy Burkin, SSJ

Planning any liturgical celebration involves the sorting out of priorities. This is particularly true in the planning of music for a Eucharistic celebration. Music has several functions at Eucharist: it can accompany an action, be the vocalization of our faith, set a mood, or impart a sense of unity to the assembled congregation. In a word, music is part of our prayer as a faith community.

Faced, then, with the responsibility of planning prayer that happens to be sung for our assembled congregation, and with the many functions music can have in a given liturgical celebration, where does one begin? What are the musical priorities?

The general priority to be examined is music itself. Is music in liturgical worship a priority? Is it important to have sung prayer at every Eucharist? Is music part and parcel of each liturgical celebration or just "window dressing" for Sunday liturgies?

Certainly the celebration of a Sunday Eucharist in a parish is the liturgical celebration of the week for that parish. Therefore, it should be more festive, more jubilant and thus more musical than a weekday celebration of Eucharist. But — and we move now to more specific priorities — are there parts of the Eucharist that are expressed more freely, more authentically in song?

The congregation assembled at any liturgical celebration is united by a common purpose, the worship of God. But, more importantly, they are united by being who they are, a people of faith, the Church. Though they come from various places, various circumstances and even various levels of faith, there are parts of the Eucharistic celebration when they are called upon to proclaim, to assent, to praise

and the fulfillment of the mystery being celebrated. Of equal priority with the processional songs — is the responsorial psalm. A psalm is essentially a song, and singing it more fully expresses our response to God's Word.

Of all the parts of the Mass that could be sung, the three above are of highest priority: Reciting acclamations, entrance and communion antiphons or psalms is artificial and leaves much to be desired by way of authentic expression and sign value. The second group of songs that ought to be examined in order of priority is that group we call ordinary chants. These include: Lord Have Mercy, Glory To God, Lord's Prayer, Lamb of God and the procession of faith. Any of these chants may or may not be sung. Certainly singing all of them would make for an overload of music.

Last on the list of priorities is a group called supplementary songs. It is interesting to note that no specified text is available for these songs nor are they part of the essential word or action of the Eucharist. This group includes: Preparation of the Gifts, thanksgiving song after communion, and the recessional. Instrumental music, if any is to be used at these times, is the more preferable. Song is not a priority here.

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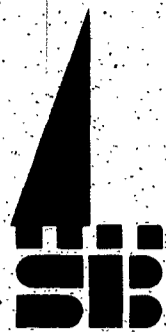
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One final consideration regarding priorities must also be understood when preparing liturgical celebrations, namely the role of the congregation. There is a direct relationship between the role of the congregation and the three groups prioritized above. As the acclamations have top priority as parts to be sung, likewise the entire assembly has top responsibility to participate in their singing. As we move down the list of priorities, the responsibility of the entire congregation taking a vocal role lessens. However, at no time does the priority of assembly response in song rule out creative use of a choir and/or cantor.



ST. BERNARD'S SEMINARY

Summer Schedule 1980

JUNE 23

1st SESSION

Psalms - Fr. Brennan

Christian Spirituality - Dr. Minton

Pastoral Counseling Lab I - Dr. Foy and Dr. Karl

JULY 14

2nd SESSION

The Pauline Mind-Set - Fr. Falcone

Religion and Contemporary American Women - Dr. Miller

Understanding Criminal Justice: A Practicum

Rev. Mackey and Rev. Law

Registration Deadline June 1, 1980

FALL 1980 - COURSE LIST

Falcone - Pentateuch

O'Grady - Prophets

Weeden - Synoptics

Weeden - Biblical Views of Suffering

Falcone - Apocalyptic Tradition

Minton - Early, Medieval History

Minton - Christian Holiness

Woolever - Introduction to Theology

Kelly - Moral Values

Hart - Sacrament of Initiation

Kennedy - Liturgiology

Hart - God, One in Three

O'Grady - Christology

Kelly - Marriage and Sexuality

Torma - Applied Soc.

Ministry

Hill - Undiscovered Self

Foy - Ministering to Women

DiFulio - Sexual Minorities

McNamara - Patristics

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Summer School 1980
St. Bernard's Seminary
2260 Lake Avenue
Rochester, N.Y. 14612

SESSIONS

— Brennan

— Minton

— Foy & Karl

— Falcone

— Miller

— Mackey & Law

Room & Board will be needed.

Information on Fall Sessions