

Insights
In Liturgy.

By Susan K. Roll



Worshipping
Community

There is an often-quoted line from the first letter of Peter, telling the early Christians that they are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people God claims for his own to proclaim the glorious works of the One who called you from darkness into his marvelous light." These adjectives aren't original; they were applied to ancient Israel in the books of Exodus, Isaiah and Malachi. But now they take on earth-shattering importance —

God claims a people for his own, irrespective of natural or national divisions, in virtue of their baptisms into the death and resurrection of the Christ.

It makes sense, then, to think about the worshipping community, bonded as one holy people, in the same liturgical season in which we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

And it makes sense as well to speak of the people of God assembled in worship as "ministers." This column is one of a series highlighting various ministerial roles in the liturgy: lector, eucharistic minister, music

minister, minister of hospitality and presider. Often it's easy to fall into the habit of thinking of a "minister" as someone set apart from the rest by performing some specialized function. But in this case, "the rest" are the people we're talking about. "The rest," those who are proclaimed a "royal priesthood," deserve better than to be thought of (or to think of themselves) as just the ordinary people of the Church, the bottom layer of a giant hierarchical pyramid — or, God help us, as the "consumers" of a liturgical program "produced" by the other specialized ministers.

Our entrance into the Christian community is through Baptism. In Baptism we symbolically die with Christ and rise with him — descending into the water, which symbolizes formlessness and nothingness, and ascending again into light, warmth and life. We are baptized as individuals and given a personal name, but Baptism is a rite of union as well, both with God and each other.

Baptism sets us apart — makes a permanent mark on the soul, as the old catechisms have it — yet, in our apartness it bonds us together, not to be an elite people, but a people charged with the task of speaking, living and being the presence of Christ in the world. And that includes being the presence of Christ to each other. A genuine Christian community is one in which the members build each other through their warm-

hearted caring and concern, mirroring the concern of Christ who gave his life for us. And each daily occurrence of this caring renews our communal sense of the presence of Christ in our midst.

Now let's tack this definition of community into a makeshift definition of liturgy: liturgy is (1) a faith community (2) praying together (3) in a way which links them to their history and traditions. What the specialized ministers do is use the materials and resources from item 3 — Scripture, music, the structure of liturgy as such — and tailor it all to converge on item 2 — the act of praying together. But neither of these is our starting point, but rather 1 — the community. Neither liturgy nor prayer will survive in a vacuum, cut loose from those living persons who together manifest the living Spirit.

In summary, then, the worshipping community represents the totality of its members' individual gifts; some may read the Word of God, some may lead in singing, all will acclaim the saving power of God in their midst. The end result is the pooling of a collective awareness of the living presence of Christ. And in this way the total becomes much, much more than the sum of its parts — for it is all of us, celebrating together, who become "the people he claims for his own to proclaim the glorious works of the One who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Sr. Margaret
Brennan, SSJ



Viewpoint: Sisters Reflect

Mother Teresa,
Dorothy Day
Good Models

Christmas is over now. The lights and trimmings to which we have become accustomed (some of them up since Halloween in our consumer-oriented shops) are gone now; the gifts are put away; the carols are stilled; the bittersweet tensions of another Christmas season are calmed. The time of the Epiphany is quieter, more reflective, as we settle in for the remainder of a Rochester winter. The shepherds in the creche have been replaced by the figures of the Magi, who faithfully followed the great light to Bethlehem and were shown the Child in the arms of His mother.

The prominence of Mary in the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany liturgy is undeniable and significant. It was through her and because of her courageous acceptance of God's word that the Word was made flesh to dwell among us. It is appropriate that we begin this column today, while the place of a woman in the mystery of the Incarnation is still fresh in our consciousness. Last September the Diocesan Sisters' Council proposed a series of articles for the Courier-Journal which would discuss the life and ministries of the 15 religious congregations of women who serve in our diocese. This series will be presented in weekly columns, running from January to August, written by sisters engaged in many ministries, both traditional and non-traditional. It is our hope that the series will be informative, provocative, perhaps even controversial, as we explore together the place of religious women in the Church, their struggles, their successes, their hopes for the Church of the 80s.

T.S. Eliot says in "The Waste Land" that "April is the cruelest month" because it forces new growth out of the dead land. But we all know that that new growth

does come from that cruel force and the dead land becomes fertile and green. Religious life has been through its "April." Religious communities have taken the renewal mandated by Vatican II seriously, and the changes of the past 15 years have been a source of some pain and misunderstanding, as religious have sought out new ways of serving the needs of the contemporary world. Here, in Rochester, sisters are visible in places they have never been before: in drop-in centers and soup kitchens, in housing projects and the homes of the rural poor; on picket lines and arbitration boards; in prisons and government offices; in welfare offices and hospital chaplaincies. They have been catalysts in liturgical renewal, social reform and educational innovation. They have maintained the more familiar roles in all phases of education, health care and pastoral work, and have reached beyond the diocese to missions in Brazil, Chile, and Selma, Ala.

Perhaps the best-known Catholic women of our time are Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the late Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker Movement — one a religious and the other a journalist. Each looked at the needs of the people around her and used her talents and the power of the Gospel to reach out to those most forgotten and victimized by society. Each has had her critics, who maintained that neither the streets nor the channels of the radical press were suitable arenas for the ministry of women. But their vision and faith sustained them and their influence has rippled far beyond the limits of Church into a world crying for justice. We can think of no better models for us as we begin this series.

We are grateful to the editor of the Courier-Journal for providing us with this forum and hope that it will be an experience of faith and new insights for all of us as we work together in the Church of Rochester to make the Word incarnate in our time.

Newark Man Ordained

Father John A. Colacino, CPPS, was ordained to the priesthood on Saturday, Dec. 13 at St. Michael's Church, Newark. Bishop Matthew H. Clark officiated.

Father Colacino, a member of the Society of the Precious Blood, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Colacino who reside in Newark. He completed his theological studies at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. He holds a bachelor of arts degree in Religious Studies from St. John Fisher and a Master of Divinity from St. Michael's.

During his preparation for the priesthood Father Colacino served in St. Michael's, Lyons; St. Vincent dePaul, Churchville, and St. Alphonsus Church, Toronto, where he completed his deacon intern program. He will serve at the Toronto parish.

Alumni Group
Presents Gift

Hornell — St. Ann's Alumni Association recently presented St. Ann's School with a check for \$2,350, representing money raised from memberships, the chicken barbecue, bake sales and other events.

New officers also have been named. William Sirianni will be president; Salvatore Falzoi, vice president; Peggy Lynch, membership secretary and treasurer; and Mary Falzoi, corresponding secretary.

Leaves Shrine

Washington — Msgr. John J. Murphy, after 14 years as assistant and then director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, is leaving that post to assume the pastorate of St. Joseph's Church on Capitol Hill.



FATHER COLACINO

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