



A Happy Day

A class of 36 Mexican youngsters from the various migrant camps in the Brockport area made their First Holy Communion recently at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. The preparation program, part of the Spanish Apostolate's Outreach to Migrants, was under the direction of Sister Maria Cristina Juarez, MGSPS, and a team of Spanish-speaking catechists. The Mass, concelebrated by Father John Podsiadlo and Father Nicolas Menjivar, included the baptism of four Mexican children.

FUND-RAISER

A benefit golf tournament has been slated as the initial fund-raiser for the newly established National Kidney Foundation of Upstate New York. The event will be held Monday, August 24 at Midvale Golf & Country Club. The donation range is \$60 to \$200 depending on the number of events in which one wishes to participate. Further information and registration forms are available at the foundation office, 441 East Ave., (716) 244-8893.

RACE PANEL

A discussion on relations between the Jewish and the black communities will be held at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, August 13, at Temple B'nai Kodesh, 2131 Elmwood Ave. Rabbi Judea B. Miller will moderate the discussion between Dr. John Walker, executive secretary of the diocesan Office of Black Ministries, and Rev. Joel Tolliver of the United Church Ministries and associate pastor of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church.

Insights In Liturgy

By Rev. Mr. Peter Schmitt



Hispanic Elements In Liturgy

Over the past several years I have been fortunate to have experienced the richness of the Puerto Rican community's practice as it has come to be expressed in Rochester. I am convinced that this richness can speak to the liturgical situation of the American community as well. Perhaps the easiest way to share some of this richness is by noting four areas of import: the "fiesta," the use of traditional Puerto Rican folk music in the liturgy, the predominance of suffering and persecution in liturgical expression, and the emergence of liberation as a central theme in liturgical expression.

Here in Rochester, as in Puerto Rico, "las fiestas" (feast days) continue to play a very important role in the community as well as in liturgical expressions. Two important ones might be noted here: the custom of celebrating the feast of the Three Kings as the premier Christmas feast and the singing that precedes it ("La Parrando"), and the "fiesta del San Juan Bautista" (the Feast of St. John the Baptist). There are sharp contrasts with American liturgical experience: The feasts are not "building-centered;" that is, while they have a liturgical expression within a church (usually a Eucharist), it is only one of many components of the celebration. There are also community-centered celebrations that continue for days, or even a week; they include a plurality of activities, from a special Mass

to the crowning of a festival queen, to the house-to-house singing during the week between Christmas and Epiphany known as "parrandiando." The entire Puerto Rican community, regardless of the degree of religious participation or commitment, celebrates these feasts.

Secondly, liturgies are enriched with traditional Puerto Rican music with its characteristic instruments: "el Cuatro," a ten-stringed mandolin type instrument; "la guitarra," the guitar; "el guiro," a percussion instrument; as well as a bass and other rhythm instruments. The result is a very beautiful musical expression that invites participation. The Rochester community is blessed with an abundance of musical talent, which has incorporated traditional "jibara" music (perhaps best translated as folk music) into many beautiful songs as well as several original compositions of the Mass.

Traditional Puerto Rican liturgical art, as well as that of most of Latin America, has had an emphasis on suffering and persecution. This is seen in two places, in the depictions of the crucifixion which are often quite detailed, and in the

yearly Good Friday procession enacted around Mt. Carmel here in Rochester. As persecution and suffering have been a part of Puerto Rican experience here, this finds a natural expression in the Good Friday procession and other liturgical events.

Finally, many have begun to contend that the liturgy should move from being an "aspirin" for the pains of the suffering community to a bringer of salvation and hope. For many years the Mass was used as a pacifier.

If there was suffering, especially among the poor, it would be compensated in the next life. More and more, members of the community here in Rochester believe that as our Lord worked and loved and died here on this earth so that we could live, we too, in our liturgies as well as our daily lives, should work to bring about a more just, holier society. It is this hope that continues to bring life and vibrancy into the liturgies of the Puerto Rican community in Rochester.

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