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Insights In Liturgy

By Father Jim Sauers

Breaking Of the Bread

As the joyful spirit of the sign of peace gently fades, the faithful gather around the table of the Lord and witness a rite that is significant in its simplicity — the Breaking of the Bread.

This ritual of fractioning is meant to symbolize unity — a oneness that extends beyond the elements of bread and wine. beyond the finitude of our human nature, for: "The blessing-cup that we bless is a communion with the blood of Christ, and the bread that we break is a communion with the body of Christ. The fact that there is only one loaf means that, though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all have a share in this one loaf." (1 Corinthians 10:16-18)

This ritual consists of three distinct elements: the breaking, the commingling, the "Lamb of God." Initially the breaking of the bread emerged from a very practical need. In order to share the eucharistic bread at the Last Supper, Jesus first had to break it! The rite itself became more elaborate with the advent of papal liturgies and now it has, unintentionally, slipped into a liturgical insignificance that betrays its original purpose.

The commingling is a part of the rite that has probably caused many of the faithful (myself included) to wonder why the priest places a small particle of the host in the chalice. Although the commingling rites have varied throughout our liturgical history, each rite has served to express some aspect of unity. It was, at one time, an expression of unity with the pope in the Church at Rome, and at another time it was an expression of unity with a mass that was previously celebrated. The present commingling rite, which originates from the first half of the eighth century, symbolizes the unity of the bread and wine - the body and blood of Christ, "a kind of symbolic reenactment of the Lord's resurrection." (The Mystery of Faith, p.102) The "Lamb of God" is a chant which was introduced by Pope Sergius I (687-701) for the purpose of filling out the rite of the breaking of the bread and the commingling. "The invocation may be repeated as often as necessary to accompany the breaking of the bread. ..." (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #56e)



Being aware of the

spirit and the history of

this ritual may cause us to

wonder how we can im-

prove our liturgical style

and expression of these

particular elements. Con-

Qur music creates an

atmosphere. It sets the

stage for what we do, and

creates the spirit with

which we do it. Although

the "Lamb of God" may

be a spoken prayer, it

enriches the ritual of the

breaking of the bread

most readily when it is

sung. In so doing, we join

our voices with John the

Baptist and the great

communion of saints in

proclaiming to all of cre-

ation: "Look, there is the

Lamb of God that takes

away the sin of the

world.'' (John 1:29)

"Look, there is the one

who is broken for us!" To

merely speak these words

at our Sunday celebration

of the Eucharist serves

only to minimalize that

which the gesture symbol-

izes. . .our faith in the

risen Lord who died and

The real challenge with

the rite of breaking is not

found in the words spoken

or the gestures used, but

rather in what is being

broken. Since most of our

parishes use the "tradi-

tional'' communion

wafers of unleavened

bread, the potential for

bringing the rite to its

most expressive point is

limited. This problem may

be solved by using more

than one large host in the

celebration and inviting

the eucharistic ministers

to assist by breaking these

hosts into several pieces

and placing them in the

various vessels that will be

used for distribution. This

simple change would help

to strengthen the im-

The unity expressed in

the commingling is best

experienced by the community gathered when

they are given the oppor-

tunity to receive commu-

nion in both forms, for we

are a people who have

been saved through the

body and blood of Jesus

The breaking of the

Christ.

portance of the rite.

rose again for us.

sider the following:

GARTL Plans Mothers Day Flower Sale

Geneva - Geneva Area Right to Life will hold its sixth annual Mothers Day flower sale after all Masses, Sunday, May 8 at St. Francis Church here, St. Mary's in Waterloo, St. Patrick's in Seneca Falls, Holy Cross in Ovid, St. Theresa's in Stanley and St. Mary's in Rushville

This is GARTL's sole fund raising project. Monies are used to educate the public on the abortion issue through publication of a newslewtter, through billboards, booths at fairs, and other avenues.

GARTL is described as "an educational and lobbying organization dedicated to the protection of human life, whether it be life threatened to the unborn by abortion, the newborn by infanticide, or any human life by mercy killing or euthanasia."

GARTL is affiliated with the New York State Right to Life Commission, the N.Y.S. Coalition for Life and Central N.Y. R.T.L. Federation.

Any church interested in participating in the flower sale is asked to call Kathy Peters, 539-8006.

Catholic Worker Celebrates 50th

Rochester's Catholic Worker community, centered at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality and Bethany House, is observing the 50th anniversary of the founding of the movement, May 1, 1933, by Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day.

The local events include a roundtable discussion among Art Farren, Tom Scahill and Father Benedict Ehmann, 'Local History of the Rochester Catholic Worker," 7:30 p.m., Friday, May 6; and an anniversary liturgy presided over by Father Daniel O'Shea, followed by a pot-luck supper, 5 p.m., Saturday, May 7.

Further information is available from Tim Sigrist, 235-6162.

Adoration

The monthly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will begin at noon, Thursday, May 5 at Blessed Sacrament Church. The afternoon of devotions includes recitation of the rosary at 12:15 p.m., and benediction at 5 p.m. preceding the regular celebration of Mass at 5:20 p.m. According to Wilma Higgs, organizer of the rites, the intention of the month corresponds to that of the National Day of Prayer which falls on May 5. Calling for the day ofprayer, she said, is based on the text of 2 Chronicles, 7:14.

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THANK YOU St. Jude and all Saints for favor received. C.G.

THANK YOU St. Jude and St. Ann for favor received. I.M.T. THANKS to SLJude for favors re-

ceived. HRK THANKS to St. Jude and all for favors received. MM.

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Annual Meeting Scheduled

The Rochester Federation of Women's Clubs will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, May 12, at the Sibley Tower Terrace Room. An executive council meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m., with a luncheon at noon. A general business meeting will follow at 1 p.m. A slidebread is a rite that is rich in tradition and symbolic expression for our communities. With a little sensitivity and reverence it may be restored to its position of simple significance. It is a ritual which celebrates our unity - symbolizes who we are. As Jesus Christ in the Bread of Life, so do we become the Bread in the receiving. As he is broken and shared, so are we challenged to break our "selves" so we may become his instruments of peace and presence to all. For it is in our brokenness that we become whole in his image and likeness.

Focus Rites

Focus on the Eucharist will open its devotions with evening prayer 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 5 at Monroe County Community Hospital. The rites include recitation of the rosary, a Mass at which Father Bruce Ammering will preside, a short meditation time and the celebration of benediction. The public is invited to the event.

'Magic' Show

"Magic," a Broadway re-view, will be presented cabaret-style, 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, May 7 and 8 at the Upstairs Youth Agency. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$4 for students. The price includes refreshments. Reservations are obtained by calling the agency, 436-0680.







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lecture, "Living Landmarks of Rochester and Monroe County" will be presented by Cynthia Howk, research coordinator of the Landmark Society of Western New

Reservations are made by calling Mary Risida, 467-