

Osservatore Writer Quits in Wake of Walesa Flap

By Father Kenneth J. Doyle
 Vatican City (NC) — Father Virgilio Levi was forced to resign June 25 as vice director of L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican's semi-official newspaper, after he created an international controversy with a front-page editorial declaring that Polish labor leader Lech Walesa is no longer a key figure in his country's future.

In announcing the resignation, the Vatican did not repudiate the editorial itself.

The priest's forced departure was a Vatican signal that it rejected misinterpretations of the editorial by the media, Vatican sources said.

The issue, they said, was not a factual one, whether Walesa still has a future role in Poland, but a political one, whether the editorial had been a public signal that Pope John Paul II wanted him removed from influence — an interpretation given to the editorial by the international press.

Father Levi, 54, a 16-year

veteran of L'Osservatore Romano, had written the controversial editorial in the issue of the paper that appeared June 24. In it the priest wrote that Walesa, former head of the now-outlawed independent labor union, Solidarity, "has lost his battle" and now "leaves the scene" as a major figure in Polish politics.

Titled "Honor to the Point of Sacrifice," the editorial praised Walesa but said that "sometimes sacrifice is nec-

essary... so that a greater good can come from it for the community."

Because of L'Osservatore's status, it is commonly taken as representing the position of the Vatican. Accordingly, some media interpreted the editorial to mean that the pope, who had met privately with Walesa the previous day at the end of the pope's visit to Poland, had directed Walesa to withdraw from the scene and that an agreement to this effect had been

reached between the Vatican and the Polish government.

In fact, the editorial did not say what had transpired at the meeting of the pope and Walesa but only that Walesa's role seemed finished, at least for the time being, because of restrictions placed on him by the Polish government.

The editorial said of Walesa that "he had to meet the holy father as a private person, in secret, without pretending to count for anything any more in the present

phase of the life of his country. And behind him lay a year of confined isolation and the return to his modest activity as an electrician."

Vatican sources said that Father Levi's resignation indicated that the pope had not asked Walesa to step aside and that a clear and unequivocal sign of this, such as the editorial writer's resignation, was necessary to counter the impression that the Vatican might have concurred in removing Walesa from prominence.

Fr. Paul J. Cuddy



On the Right Side

Listening To the Woes Of a Friend

Mr. X is a former seminarian: intelligent, devout and concerned about the Church. During a two-hour dinner together, he presented his frustrations. He is a successful salesman. He said: "I try to go to Mass every day, and because I am on the road so much, observe not only legitimate options in the Mass but what I think are wrong-doings and defiance against the Church. Why are they permitted?"

Here are some of the problems presented. The responses come from the official document *On Sacrament and Worship*, signed by Pope John Paul II, April 17, 1980.

Mr. X: "I was at Mass at a college chapel where a woman — she may have been a Sister — read much of the Mass prayers, including the Eucharistic parts. The priest just sat, but did come to the altar for the consecration, which he did perform."

Response: Not infrequently college and university chaplains think that normal liturgy is not quite worthy for sophisticated collegians. I had a friend who was a chaplain at a large university. He gave the students the normal Mass of the Church. His chapel was packed every Sunday. Yet he was considered a retrograde odd-ball by most of the chaplains in his diocese (not the Rochester diocese) who gave a riper liturgy and had much smaller attendance.

My own experience is that many collegians are turned off by peculiar Mass celebrations, and go to parish churches "where Mass is like it is at home." The document of worship reads: "It is an abuse to have some parts of the Eucharistic prayer said by the deacon or the faithful. On the other hand, the assembly does not remain passive and inert. It unites itself to the priest in faith and silence, and shows its concurrence by the various interventions provided in the course of the Eucharistic prayer. The responses to the Preface dialogue, the Sanctus, the Acclamation after the consecration, and the final Amen after the *Per Ipsum* (Through Him, with Him, unto Him). The *Per Ipsum* itself should be reserved to the priest. This

Amen especially should be emphasized by being sung, since it is the most important part in the whole Mass." (#4)

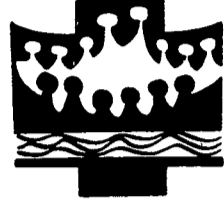
Mr. X: "Recently I received Holy Communion, and the consecrated bread was chewy and sweet. It certainly had honey or some sweet substance added. Is this permitted?"

Resp.: It is gravely forbidden. Any priest who tampers with the matter and form of the sacraments should effectively be reprehended by his superiors. The bread you describe is gravely illicit. It may be invalid. The document reads: "The bread for the celebration of the Eucharist must be made solely of wheat. . . No other ingredients are to be added to wheat flour and water. . . The preparation of the bread requires attentive care to insure that the product can be broken in a dignified way, does not give rise to excessive fragments and does not offend the sensibilities of the faithful." (#8)

When experimentation was riding high a dozen years ago I heard a priest give a talk to Legionnaires of Mary on "The Mass of the Future." He envisioned doughnuts and coffee to replace bread and wine. My heart goes out to faithful Catholics like my ex-seminarian friend who are troubled in conscience and intelligence by liturgies which Fancy Dons perpetrate. The document declares in its preface: "One who offers worship to God on the church's behalf in a way contrary to that which is laid down by the Church with God-given authority and which is customary in the Church is guilty of falsification."

It continues: "The faithful have a right to a true liturgy, which means the liturgy desired and laid down by the Church. . . The use of unauthorized texts means a loss of the necessary connection between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi* (i.e. The Church's legislated prayer reflects the Church's authoritative teaching). . . No person, even if he be a priest, may add, remove or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority." With such explicit directions given by the Church, is there any wonder at the distress of my friend?

Insights In Liturgy



By Sister Mary Kay Ryan, SSJ

Postures At Prayer

"Stand", "Sit", "Kneel", "Bow", "Genuflect" are the ordinary ritual postures of our liturgical prayer. The general instruction of the Roman Missal, Articles 20 and 21, tells us that these, done in common and with reflection, can be "a sign of the unity of the assembly and its sense of community, and express and foster the inner spirit and purpose of those who take part in it. Each action and posture must correspond to the character and meaning of each part of the celebration". The postures that we use in liturgical celebration, then, are not chosen arbitrarily. Each, performed with attention and care, can bring one to greater depth of prayer and celebration. While it is true that a good symbol does not need to be explained, it can be helpful to reflect on these liturgical postures in order to keep their symbolic meanings alive within us.

The posture that is the most difficult, standing, is done for the greatest amount of time in most liturgical celebrations! Here we can learn a great deal from dancers of yogi who practice the standing posture. They strive for alignment and control of the body by concentrating on the position of the spine and its muscular support structure. In liturgical celebration we stand for the Gospel, for solemn prayer, praise and acclamation, such as the Eucharistic Prayer. We stand with dignity, side by side, as witness, priest, prophet and king - as Church - to raise our prayer to God, and to listen with attention, ready and poised for response. The standing posture is completed by attentiveness, expressed by eye contact between the assembly and the presider or reader. Dr. Nathan Jones, a keynote speaker at the recent conference, Harvest A Hundredfold, declared, "A lot of us Christians should inform our faces!"

We sit at liturgical celebrations not passively to rest and relax, but actively for preparations, for listening and for silent reflection. Sitting as far back as possible in one's chair so that the spine is automatically and comfortably held erect is a technique that frees our

minds and spirits for active participation. The gesture of placing one's hands on our laps in an open, cupped position can also be an aide to our prayer in these quiet, receptive times of liturgical celebrations.

Kneeling and its variations, bowing and genuflection, are the postures of adoration and the penitential rites. Unlike standing and sitting they are not part of our 1980s common movement vocabulary and may make one feel self-conscious or uncomfortable. The remedy I suggest is to consciously pray the movement with body, mind and spirit. Genuflection has an interesting history. It originated as a medieval three-step or tripod (which also translates as jubilate) that involved three steps forward and one back, to signify humility in the act of going forward but faltering.

Movement done in common always has a visual effect. Movements and postures done in common at liturgical celebrations "create a tremendous impact on the assembly visually, environmentally and bodily". (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, Article 55). When the community then, takes these postures with attention and with prayer "it gathers to celebrate what is most personally theirs and most nobly and truly Church". (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, Article 105).

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