

'Right Stuff'

By Michael C. New York (The "Right Stuff" (V) film version of the celebrated story novel seven years ago become an e film.

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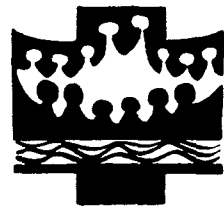
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Insights In Liturgy

By Marge Nurnberg



The Lima Text: Baptism, Eucharist And Ministry

Part I

At the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Vancouver, the Faith and Order Commission presented a statement - the Lima text - to the membership. That statement is the result of a 50 year process of study and consultation and marks a major advance in the ecumenical journey.

The Lima text/papers/document, presented as Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (and now known simply as BEM), represents significant theological convergences. Some background into the WCC and Faith and Order is necessary before one can truly appreciate just how remarkable this convergence is.

The World Council of Churches is a "fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Constitution). By clearly defining the WCC one can see that it is not a universal authority controlling what Christians should believe and do. The member churches represent a diversity of cultural traditions, worship in dozens of languages, and live under every kind of political system. They are committed to Christian witness and service and are striving to realize the goal of visible Church unity.

The Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches has been called the most inclusive group of American Christians doing theology for the sake of Christian unity. Its membership of 70 in-

cludes Roman Catholics, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Anglicans, "mainline" Protestants and conservative Evangelicals. Its task is "to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ" and "to keep prominently before the churches the obligation to foster that unity."

Those who know how widely the churches have differed in doctrine and practice, realize that it is "unprecedented in the modern ecumenical movement" (Preface) for theologians of nearly all confessional traditions to be in such accord about baptism, eucharist and ministry. (The delegates at Lima broke into spontaneous applause and corporate prayer after their unanimous vote was recorded!) The convergences give assurance that the churches have much in common in their understanding of the Christian faith. It required consideration and coordination of the theological agreements already reached in the many lateral and bi-lateral dialogues between churches and demanded continual interchanges with church leaders and theological commissions as they critically evaluated earlier drafts.

In August 1981, I was privileged to be one of 20 ecumenical officers who met at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in Collegeville for 10 days of intensive study of the then, latest draft of the "Lima papers." Our comments and suggestions were collated under the auspices of the National Bishops Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and sent to Faith and Order in Switzerland. In comparing the early draft we studied with the final text, it is obvious that the critique of the U.S. ecumenical officers was considered.

(Mrs. Marge Nurnberg is the director of the Office of Ecumenism for the Diocese of Rochester.)

NFP Class Scheduled to Begin Nov. 15

A Natural Family Planning class will begin at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 15, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Brighton. Enrollment is limited and pre-registration required.

Sponsored by Natural Family Planning Education of Rochester, the class will be led by certified instructors John and Ann Jones.

NFP can be used to plan or postpone pregnancy. Free information sessions will take place at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 7, at St. Mary's Hospital, and at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 11, at Rochester General Hospital. All interested are invited.

Further information and a free brochure are available by telephoning (716) 464-8705.

Miss Polonia Contest Oct. 22

The annual "Miss Polonia" contest and ball will be at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 22, at the St. Stanislaus Auditorium. The 1983-84 queen and two alternates will be selected to represent the Polish community of Rochester.

The event is sponsored by the Polish Army Veterans Post #27. Polish food will be served and tickets will be available at the door.

KofC Communion

The annual corporate Communion of the Knights of Columbus will be at the 10:15 a.m. Mass, Sunday, Oct. 30 at the Church of the Annunciation on Norton Street. Following the liturgy, a light breakfast will be served in the parish center with the commandery and auxiliary of Mount Carmel as hosts.

Fr. Louis J. Hohman

The Open Window



Praying To Saints

Dear Father Hohman: In a recent issue of the Courier-Journal, F.G. wrote and questions the fact that so many people were praying to St. Jude. Believe me, these people are not praying with this saint, they're praying to St. Jude. For seven years I prayed to St. Jude and sent a tenth of my take home pay to the shrine of St. Jude in Maryland. During that period of time I seldom if ever prayed to Jesus, my savior and redeemer.

I would like to say to F.G. and others that there is no mediator between God our Father and man other than Jesus Christ.

M.K.

Dear M.K.: You are singularly right on two counts: Jesus is indeed the only mediator between God and the human race, and many people do pray to St. Jude, rather than ask the intercession of St. Jude.

However, I do think that many others hold unquestioning faith in the sole mediatorship of Jesus while still speaking as though they are asking the saint for a favor. And as a matter of fact, one can address the saint without praying to the saint, e.g. "St. Jude, pray for us."

The reason I put so much time into this question is its ecumenical implications. When presented by staunch fundamentalists, they make it appear to be a big difference between themselves and the Catholic Church.

For some people it is indeed a problem; but we cannot expect everyone to be able to grasp every theological subtlety. It should be enough to indicate that the teaching of the Catholic Church concerning praying to (for) the intercession of saints does not in any way militate against the sole mediatorship of Jesus Christ. We can't help it if some people still insist that it does.

The whole business of vigil lights and candles is another area where misunderstanding can and does occur. Why do people light vigil lights in churches to that being superstitious? Is there a legitimate understanding of the use of candles?

Certainly some people do abuse the use of candles in the sense of superstition. It should be evident that the candles have no inherent power to do anything and that they have no "effect" on God.

But it is also true that some people have a real need to act out or make concrete their legitimate concerns. For them, lighting a candle is a symbolic gesture of their concern and that their humble prayer stands before God brightly and constantly. In this latter understanding there is certainly nothing wrong.

One of the reasons I am proud of my Catholic heritage is its genius through the ages in combining the spiritual with the material to make the whole reality more apparent. Sacraments, sacramentals, signs and symbols all do this. Can they be misunderstood and used in a kind of heretical way? Certainly.

But we don't throw out legitimate uses because of possible abuses.

Pearl Bailey Benefit Singer

Pearl Bailey, singer, actress, and author, will perform in the Stars for Strong celebrity series at 8

p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the Eastman Theatre.

All proceeds from the

project will benefit Strong Memorial Hospital. The series is sponsored by Friends of Strong in cooperation with McCurdy's and Channel 13.

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Alcoholism Seminar Oct. 20

Elmira - Debra Lauper, community coordinator/STARS, will speak on "Parents and Prevention: Exploring Values," at the monthly alcoholism seminar at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 20, in the doctors' meeting room at St. Joseph's Hospital. For further information, contact the STARS office, (607) 733-5519.

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