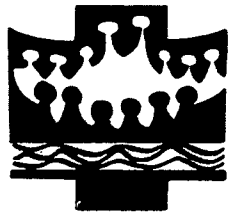


Insights
In Liturgy



By Father Thomas P. Mull

Why Go to
Formation
Sessions?

Last week I spent some time explaining the coming fall offerings made available through the Liturgy Office. This week, I would like to offer some reflections concerning the reasons why it is important to attend workshops having to do with worship/liturgy.

So often when people express an interest in joining an organization, one of the first questions asked is, "What will be expected of me?" People like to know the parameters of responsibility. Before making a commitment, people want to know what the commitment involves. Oftentimes, there are guidelines, job descriptions, organization directives/by-laws which

give this information. Coming to know these, forms the necessary initiation for the new members.

Liturgical ministry can be seen in somewhat the same light. When a person enters (or considers entering) a ministry, it is only fair that he/she know the responsibilities of that position. A formation session's goal is to identify these responsibilities. For Christian people, of course, the responsibility flows from Baptism. Through Baptism, Christians are empowered to continue the mission of Jesus. This mission takes a person into many areas of concern -- one of which is the area of liturgical experience. Yet, how many people when they become eucharistic

ministers, ushers, lectors, servers, or cantors do so because of a baptismal call? Sometimes eyes have to be opened to the "whys" and "hows" of our sacramental experience. Formation programs do just that!

After one begins to serve a community, often there surfaces a longing for more knowledge and background for relevant information. Enrichment programs can aid individual reading and research. Such programs invite the participants to reflect on a particular ministry in light of tradition, history and development. For example, eucharistic ministers can be helped when their knowledge of Eucharistic theology is deepened and an awareness of their place in the history of the Church is established. This information is added to that of the initial

formation program. The whole area of prayer is explored to further allow an individual to grow personally and spiritually through liturgical ministry. This is not an instantaneous happening -- it is something which needs nourishing and support.

There is also the need for Church-identity. One can easily appease a conscience with the knowledge that one is helping out another. Yet, there is a sense of community loyalty which is enhanced when one understands the meaning of being a "team member." There is no liturgical ministry which depends on personal charisma. There is no liturgical ministry meant solely for personal satis-

faction. Liturgical ministry is, at its base, a community experience. It is done with "others in mind." Knowledge of the Church (we call it ecclesiology) is necessary if a person is going to be an active member of that Church. Continued education allows a person to develop an attitude and understanding of "being Church."

over the Liturgy offerings for the Fall/Winter of 1984, please keep some of these thoughts in mind. Look at the coming season as a time when new doors may open, established patterns may be enhanced, and you, as an individual and as a member of Church, may grow. We can always learn. We never stop developing and rediscovering the wonderful presence of God.

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