

World & Nation

Official clarifies new norms governing church concerts

From NC News
 Current U.S. practice seems generally in accord with new norms for concerts in churches issued December 5 by the Vatican, said Father John Gurrieri, executive director of the U.S. bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

One key provision that could affect some churches is a prohibition against charging admission for such events.

Father Gurrieri said he did not know of any churches that charge admission for their concerts. "Where there is a request (for money), it's for a free-will offering" to help pay for heating and lighting and other expenses of putting on the concert, he said.

Another key provision in the new norms prohibits the performance of non-religious music in concerts held in churches. According to Father Gurrieri, church concert programs in the United States are generally devoted mainly, if not exclusively, to music that would be considered sacred or religious in inspiration.

Monsignor John A. O'Connell of St. Thomas More Cathedral in Arlington, Virginia, in the suburbs of Washington, said the cathedral usually sponsors around seven concerts a year.

The program is designed around observance of the liturgical seasons, he said. "We don't sell tickets. We do have an offering taken up halfway through (the concert) to defray expenses," Monsignor O'Connell said.

Father Gurrieri said the new Vatican document "does not prohibit organ recitals or choral performances ... It's just saying that care should be taken" to see that such performances are appropriate for the church setting.

According to a high-ranking official involved in its preparation, the Vatican document was designed "to defend against abuses that offend Catholics."

Many Catholics protest when they learn that churches are being used as stages for non-liturgical or non-religiously inspired music, the official added.

But the new rules, made public in December, are broad enough to allow for black spirituals and other music judged by the local bishop to be religiously inspired, said the official, who asked not to be named.

Under these rules, for example, a Beethoven Mass may be performed in a church but one of Beethoven's nine sym-

phonies would be disallowed, the official said.

The norms cite Canon 1210 which permits bishops to use churches for non-liturgical purposes "provided they are not contrary to the sacred character of the place."

The official said the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship, which drafted the rules, had received complaints from several countries that churches were being used to stage secular music. He cited specifically complaints from Rome and Salzburg, Austria.

"In Salzburg, secular music was being accompanied by dramatic scenes. These disturbed many Catholics," said the official. In Rome, some churches were charging admission for concerts, he said. People were entering churches without showing the proper respect, he said without elaboration.

Father Gurrieri pointed out that the document contains "a lot of positive things" and cited: its emphasis on maintaining the special character of the church as a place of worship; the "insistence that liturgical music of the past that does not suit the reformed liturgy should not be used liturgically."

Although the main thrust of the document is to regulate the use of churches for music outside of a liturgical setting, it also briefly restates general norms for music within the liturgy.

It notes that one reason for an apparently growing use of churches for concerts is the fact that liturgical reforms designed to promote "an end of greater importance, namely the active participation of the faithful," have made a large body of sacred music from earlier periods "no longer ... suitable for inclusion within liturgical cele-



NC photo by John Fesler
WE FOUR KINGS — Brother Leo Raible, bundled in a black coat and hat, looks as though he might be a fourth Wise Man as he sets up a display of silhouetted figures outside St. Joseph Church in Dover, Ohio. The display is set up annually in the church yard.

brations.

Much polyphonic choral music and Gregorian chant has come to be used rarely or never in actual liturgical celebrations as a result of the reforms, the document said, and church concerts outside a liturgical setting have come to be seen as one way for the church to encourage interest in and preservation of its "treasury of sacred music."

Professor suggests limits for Christmas buying

Detroit (NC) — Set limits on your Christmas buying "appetite" and you will avoid post-holiday problems, said Michael Bernacchi, a marketing professor at the Jesuit-run University of Detroit.

In an interview in *The Michigan Catholic* archdiocesan newspaper, Bernacchi compared buying to eating. "If you overeat, you get sick. It's Mother Nature's way of saying, 'that's enough,' he said. "Now we have cash, the checkbook, and now we have credit cards so we can bloat to unrealistic, unthought-of dimensions."

The seduction of "buy now, pay later" can cause consumers to "not even look at the scale, not even care," he suggested. "The fuel feeding the appetite is the Christmas season, so can it be wrong?"

Bernacchi suggested that Christmas shoppers should:

- Identify who's on their gift list;
- Allocate a total to be spent on each person;
- Calculate an overall total of what they really can afford.

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EDWIN SULEWSKI
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Why is there such an emphasis on death and grief today?

There have been great advances in medical science which have removed death from the daily lives of most Americans. Because of this we are generally unfamiliar with death and grief. We are fortunate that our experience with death has lessened, but nevertheless it's important to learn about the things we can do to help ourselves and friends. Making wills and understanding how to help our grieving friends will help us cope better when the stress of a death comes into our lives. Avoiding death by ignoring it, by not making wills or by not going to funerals or visitations is a denial of reality!

We purchase all forms of insurance to protect our family & assets, not because we expect the worst to happen, but to be prepared. Doesn't it make sense then to prepare for what will happen. Let our trained counselors assist you with the many options available in planning for a worry-free future.

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