

Priestly training's a 'bargain' in Nigeria

By Father Paul J. Cuddy
Catholic Courier columnist

For many years, I have been zealous to help with vocations to the priesthood and sisterhood in Africa. This past spring, a lady in Elmira who is a faithful reader of this column sent me a check for \$1,000, saying: "I should like it to be used for missions in Africa, and leave it to your judgment where to send it."

Father Jerry Aman, SJ, is a holy Jesuit from Webster. He has a neat beard and looks like the pictures of Our Lord. His parents were farmers, and brought up a fine family of seven or eight children, all active Catholics, and one, Leo, a deacon.

After he served a stint as chaplain to high schoolers at Canisius High in Buffalo, Jerry's superiors sent him about three years ago to Benin City, Nigeria. I knew of his zeal for seminarians. Hence his letter to me, and to the Elmira patron who wishes to be anonymous. A couple years ago, I wrote in this column that cash to help seminarians

in Africa is a great bargain. Note this thought in his letters.

Dear Father Cuddy:

"Thank you for the check for \$1,000 from that generous Elmiran. It's a huge amount of money over here. We'll use it to help three of our boys from the parish in the seminary, set some aside for use in a vocation-promotion program we run in the parish, and send some along to our bishop for the boys in the seminary.

"Training young men to be priests here in Nigeria is a bargain. But even given bargain rates, the cash is often short, and I know that the seminarians are on the lean and hungry side because food is not overly plentiful..."

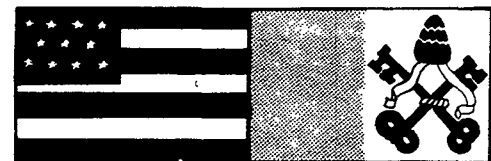
To the Elmira benefactor:

"Greetings from Nigeria! Father Cuddy just sent me a letter which included a check for \$1,000 from you as a gift to be used for some missionary need in the Third World. We have a tremendously alive and rapidly growing Church in Nigeria. At the Easter

Vigil this year we baptized 297 adults and received 25 converts into the Church, just in our parish. It was a joyous ceremony that went on for four and one-half hours. Despite the length and the late hour, no one was tired. It's such a joy to be a priest and to celebrate Mass with such enthusiastic parishioners.

"Here at St. Joseph's in Benin City we are three Jesuit priests, all from the U.S. There are several young men in our seminaries in preparation to become Jesuit priests. The vocations to the diocesan priesthood and sisterhoods are very numerous. Last year we had seven vocations from our parish alone. This year the Bishop will ordain five new priests for the diocese, and seven the next year. For a diocese with 45 priests at present, that will be a tremendous increase. But we also could use more.

"So we plan to use your gift to help promote vocations, and to pay for the sem-



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inary training of as many boys as we can. The expenses for keeping a young man in the seminary are very low, compared especially to the U.S. Even so, money is scarce here, so the boys don't get the food to eat they really should have. Your generous gift will make a huge difference in the lives of these future priests.

"And I am sure that they will be generous in their prayers in remembering you and all who help along their way to the priesthood."

If any reader wishes to share in this training of young men and women for the religious life in Africa, please contact me at St. Alphonsus Church, 10 Lewis St., Auburn, NY, 13021.

Council's liturgy document touches heart of church's mission

By Father Richard P. McBrien
Syndicated columnist

The Second Vatican Council produced 16 separate documents, some remarkably substantive, like the "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*), and some embarrassingly thin, like the "Decree on the Instruments of Social Communication."

One document that clearly deserves its place in the highest ranks of conciliar texts is the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy." Not only was it a generally outstanding piece of work, but it also touched upon realities that are at the heart of the church's life and mission.

The liturgy, or public worship of the church, is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all the Church's power flows" (No. 10).

It is worth noting what the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops said about the document in its final report (1985): "The liturgical renewal is the most visible fruit of the whole conciliar effort. Even if there have been some difficulties, it has generally been received joyfully and fruitfully by the faithful."

There are Catholics, however, both inside and outside the clergy, who have still not understood or accepted some of the most basic principles of the liturgical renewal.

A recent report by the Association of Jesuit Liturgists in the April issue of *National Jesuit News* calls attention, at least indirectly, to a few examples of misunderstanding, and suggests some helpful guidelines for reflection and discussion.

Some Catholics still equate worship with ritual, even though both Old and New Testaments warned us against placing sacrifices and sin offerings above a change of heart and a readiness to do God's will (Psalm 40 and the Epistle to the Hebrews 10:5-10).

The Jesuit document insists that worship

goes beyond ritual expression. Christ's worship of God is also expressed in catechesis, social action, teaching, counseling, research and other forms of Christian service. This is consistent, of course, with Vatican II's declaration that "liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church" (No. 9).

On the other hand, liturgical prayer is, according to the Jesuit study document, "the normal way in which the whole body and its individual members take part here and now in the heavenly worship of the rest of the Communion of Saints." Because it is the public prayer of the church, "Personal preference, taste, and need must always give way to the ideal expressed in the tradition of the Church."

At the same time, liturgy is also "a form of human ritual activity which arises from, expresses and deepens human experience of faith." In other words, it should never lose touch with the ordinary experiences of the worshipping community itself. Indeed, because it is the prayer of the church and not merely something done by priests for the church, the whole congregation should be encouraged to recognize and exercise the role it ought to play in each celebration.

"Presiders," the Jesuit document reminds us by way of example, "never 'take over' the role of lector or cantor.

"Participation by the entire assembly in singing, movement, gesture, etc., more fully involves each member physically, emotionally, intellectually and imaginatively and more easily draws the community together as a unified whole."

Given the essentially communal nature of the liturgy, the document logically concludes that so-called private Masses (Eucharists celebrated by a priest without a congregation, and sometimes even without an altar server) "should be celebrated only in an emergency."

When might such an emergency situation exist? "Solitary confinement in a concentration camp is an emergency. Finding

oneself at home alone on a Sunday morning is not."

And what of daily Mass, private or otherwise? Because of the "great care that goes into preparation of a Eucharistic celebration and its symbolism of unifying a community as Body of Christ," questions must at least be raised about daily celebration. For many Catholics, in fact, daily Mass is less a communal act of worship than a private devotion — one particularly appropriate as a Lenten "penance."

What of concelebration? It "should be limited to special occasions when significant Christian community is gathered and the unity of the ordained does not overshadow the unity of the assembly as a whole."

What should priests do in other circumstances? According to the Jesuit document, "it would be better for us to express



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our identity with the baptized people of God than to express the distinction created by ordination."

Finally, if we really believe all that we say we believe about the mystery of the Eucharist, the space, the environment, the furnishings, the music, and the vestments should reflect that belief. Everything should be beautiful, scrupulously clean, and in good repair.

Unfortunately, you can't always take even that much for granted.

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

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My Friend's baby died. How can I Help?
Infants are very important to their parents. The hopes that are built during pregnancy, the excitement at birth and the thrill of getting to know the infant are dashed when the baby's life ends. Parents ought to be allowed to grieve and express their feelings. If possible, an opportunity to talk with other parents who have also lost young children can be most helpful. It is usually not helpful to suggest that now there is another angel in heaven or that the parents grief will be eased by simply having another child. Visit the family often and allow them to tell you of their loss and what the infant meant to them. Please call us for referrals to local support groups.

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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United Way campaign tops goal in Rochester

ROCHESTER — The 1989 United Way/Red Cross campaign was a success this year, with officials reporting more than \$34.5 million raised to date. The pledges represent a 7.5 percent increase over last year's total.

Campaign chairman Donald Lennox said Wednesday, May 10, that this year's campaign pledges exceeded last year's total by \$2.4 million. He noted a rise in employee gifts and a 6-percent increase in corporate contributions.

United Way volunteers attracted nearly 10,000 new donors, 911 new employee group accounts and doubled the number of Rochester-area companies conducting re-

three campaigns, according to Lennox. Nearly 250,000 individuals annually contribute to United Way.

According to United Way President Joseph Calabrese, the amount raised by Rochester during the campaign is the most of any its size in the nation.

Sisters seeking rosaries

The Sisters of Charity are requesting donations of rosaries and other religious articles to be distributed among patients with acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Donations should be sent to: Sisters of Charity, 1280 Winton Rd. North, Rochester, N.Y., 14609.