

Eastern Rite

Continued from page 1

preserving the sacredness and separateness of the holy place, he noted.

Tradition is an important part of Eastern-Rite practice. "Our rite is older than the Latin Rite," Father Lukachyk maintained.

Yet, at the same time, the rite has proven adaptable, Father Lukachyk said, noting that the Eastern Rite called for liturgical use of the vernacular centuries before Vatican II allowed the Roman Church to use languages other than Latin at Mass.

In fact, many of the innovations allowed in the Roman Church since Vatican II have been a part of Eastern tradition since its inception. Among those elements are more frequent concelebrations by priests, greater participation of the laity during the liturgy, Communion under both species, and the married diaconate.

Father Mezzomo maintained that in preserving these practices over the years, Eastern-Rite churches simply have kept alive traditions they once shared with the Roman church. The West, he suggested, could learn from the Eastern church's "faithfulness to the tradition and not

to innovation."

"We have not been affected by Vatican II the way you have in the Latin Rite," Father Lukachyk acknowledged. "You search for identity in the Latin Rite. We have it. We have the traditions. The Latin Rite is still trying to update the church."

One early tradition the Eastern churches have maintained — but which the Western church has not reinstated — is optional celibacy for priests. And differences over this practice have actually been a source of tension between the churches.

In 1929, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States appealed to Rome to prohibit Eastern churches from ordaining married men in the United States, claiming that the presence of married priests was a scandal to the church and confusing to Roman Catholic congregations, Father Lukachyk pointed out.

Father Ronald Golini, director of the Office of Communications for the Melkite-Greek Diocese of Newton, Mass., said that the Vatican's decision to approve the U.S. bishops' request has produced great pain for the Eastern-Rite churches over the years.

"It has caused a lot of churches and a lot of clergy to leave (the Catholic Church)," said Father Golini, whose diocese encompasses the entire United States. He observed that the issue remains a touchy topic, "especially when the (Roman) Catholic Church has been accepting married Anglican priests. Basically, it's hard to understand why it's kept in place."

In countries where it is permissible to ordain married men to the Eastern-Rite priesthood, the churches are able to recruit enough priests to meet their needs, Father Golini said. In the United States, however, Eastern-Rite churches are suffering the

same shortage of vocations as experienced by the church of Rome.

Those problems are compounded by the small sizes of the Eastern-Rite churches. For example, Bishop Ignatius Ghattas, newly appointed head of the Melkite Church, has been unable to move to Newton because a replacement has not yet been found to take over his parish in Cleveland, Ohio.

Although they are far fewer in number than the Roman Catholic clergy, Eastern-Rite priests have made significant contributions to the overall Catholic life within the United States and in the Diocese of Rochester.

Nationally, for example, Bishop Basil H. Losten, head of the Diocese of Stamford, Conn., is currently a member of the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Locally, Eastern- and Roman-Rite priests within the Rochester diocese have long cooperated in such ways as assisting with confessions and liturgies at each others' parishes. Father Ralph Fraats, a Roman Catholic priest, even served as a part-time assistant at Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Church in Auburn for several years.

Although they do not fall under the authority of the Roman Catholic diocese, Eastern-Rite priests, meanwhile, are kept up-to-date about diocesan developments, and are invited to participate in such activities as the annual priests' convocation.

Looking at the diversity in the universal Catholic church, Father Lukachyk simply observed, "The church is made up of a beautiful garden with a variety of flowers. If it was just the Latin Rite, it wouldn't have the beauty that it has."

Czechs

Continued from page 4

of the population professes Catholicism, while an additional 17 percent are "hidden Catholics" who kept their faith a secret. These include secretly ordained bishops and priests, secret lay organizations and professed religious. The current population is 15.6 million.

The pope made clear that all these distinctions must cease so that a single church emerges. This includes accepting priests from the Pacem in Terris association, which collaborated with the communist government, he said.

Pacem in Terris was disbanded last December, but the members are still functioning priests.

Other principal tasks mentioned by the pope include:

- Learning to work with bishops and understand their authority after "more than a generation" of many dioceses without ordinaries.
- Renewal of church intellectual life

based on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and its emphasis on lay responsibility in handling many aspects of church activity.

- Forming cornerstone institutional church structures such as a strong bishops' conference and a nationwide network of parishes and seminaries.

- Developing religious education programs in schools from the elementary to the universal level.

- Getting involved in ecumenical activity.

While renewing itself, the church must not become isolated from the overall society, the pope said.

It should "promote the political freedom and responsibility of citizens" while maintaining its independence from the state, he added.

He showed sensitivity to the country's main ethnic division between the majority Czechs and minority Slovaks. He spoke mostly Czech, and his major speeches were in the Czech part of the country.

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