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FEATURE**Inculturation**

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Caribbean, also have celebrated diocesan Masses reflecting their cultural backgrounds, Father Kennedy added.

But parishes made up primarily of white Catholics have not necessarily dealt with inculturation, Father Gallen noted, because no one can define white "American" culture, which often obscures many people's distinct ethnic origins.

"It is a real struggle because American culture is so homogenized," he said.

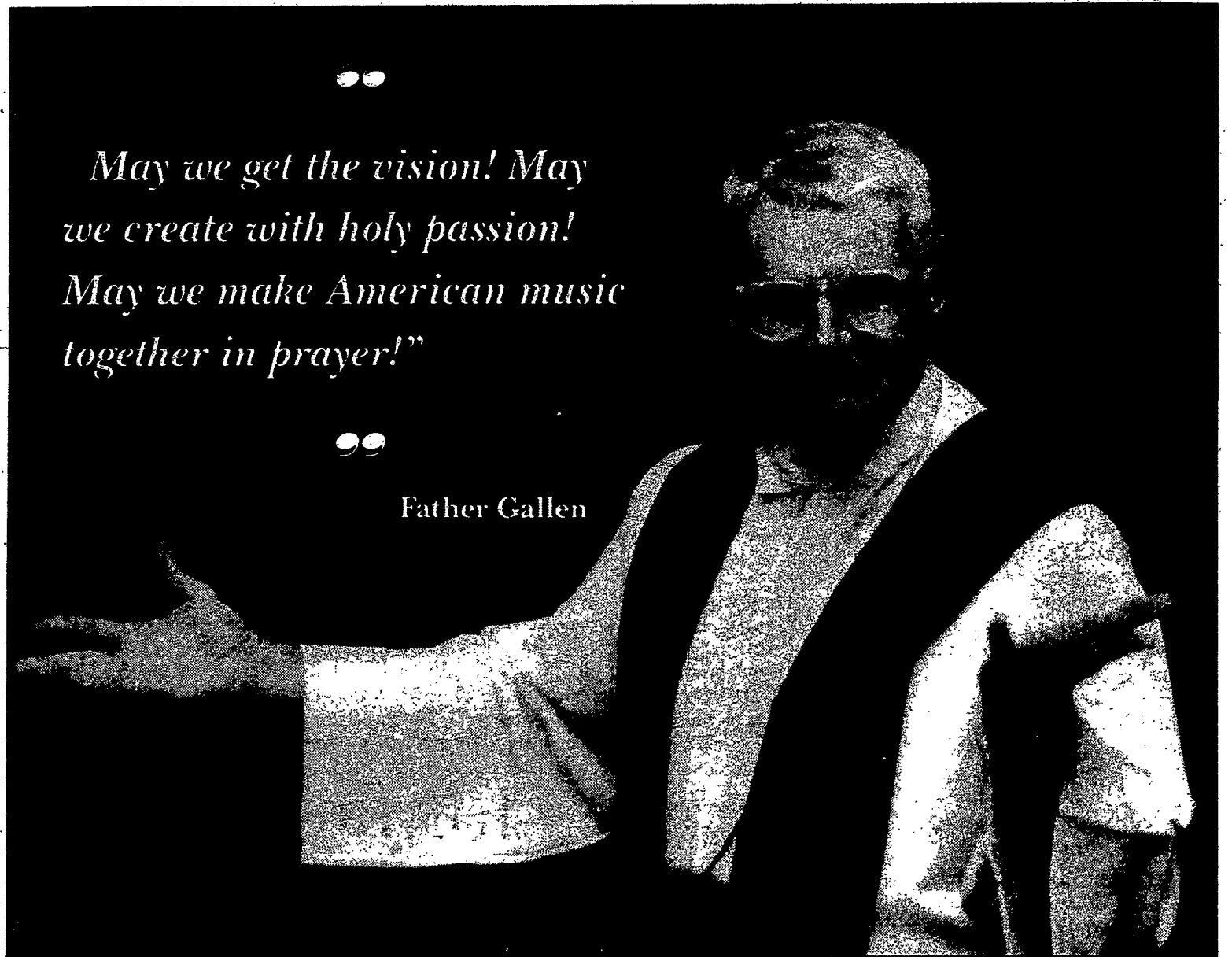
At the same time, white Catholics — as do white Americans — live in a society heavily influenced by non-white ethnic groups who have significantly contributed to the development of American culture, he noted. Much U.S. popular music, for example, combines white and black musical sensibilities, the well-known liturgist explained. This meeting of musical minds also takes place in churches where whites often sing African-American spirituals and blacks often adapt white hymns for their own purposes, he said.

Father Kennedy added that some modern hymns sound like they might perform well on Broadway, and that U.S. musicians may lead the way in defining what U.S. Catholic culture will become.

Other issues emerge in the struggle to create an American liturgy in such a diverse culture, Father Kennedy said. He noted, for example, that the U.S. church has put particular emphasis on inclusive language in the Mass — that is, language that recognizes both genders. But the Vatican has proven hostile to the U.S. bishops' support for such an approach, as recent announcements illustrate.

And creating a liturgy that supports every ethnic group's definition of "family" challenges liturgists because some parishes stress nuclear families whereas others stress extended families, Father Kennedy said.

Joan Workmaster, director of the diocesan Office of Liturgy, reported that sometime in the next two weeks, the diocese will issue a set of inculturation



Father John Gallen, SJ, Nov. 15 delivers his final talk to an audience at St. Leo's Church in Hilton, concluding his three-day mission titled, 'Prayer: The Encounter with the God of Mystery.'

guidelines for the planning of diocesan-wide liturgies.

Such guidelines will go beyond calling for the inclusion of a gospel song or a Spanish-speaking lector, she said.

"It's really a major step forward for the diocese to take this kind of preparation," Workmaster said, noting that in the past "we may have paid lip service" to inculturation.

She added that creating diocesan liturgies that respect and reflect all of the various cultures represented here will

be a daunting task but one which the diocese must undertake.

Diocesan Parish Support Ministries also plans to host a conference on Sept. 30, 1995, devoted to how culture influences the way people pray, Workmaster said. The conference will probably feature some speakers of national prominence, she explained.

Although no inculturation guidelines exist for parishes as of yet, Father Kennedy speculated that the diocese would deal with such an issue down the road. Along with Workmaster, he acknowledged that liturgical inculturation in a diocese as diverse as Rochester's is no easy thing to achieve.

"There's a great deal of conversation about inculturation of the liturgy but no real agreement about the direction of it," Father Kennedy concluded.

That direction should be determined by Catholics who consider themselves artists, Father Gallen maintained. The liturgical expert hopes for the day when

pastors will ask musicians in their parishes to write hymns for the Mass, and invite other artists to contribute their talents to enhancing the eucharistic celebration.

Historians, theologians and administrators have contributed their share of expertise to liturgical renewal, he continued, but now is the time for artists to answer Vatican II's call for inculturation. Artists must create liturgies where Catholics *feel* Christian so that they can *think* Christian, he asserted.

"People live at the level of image, symbol and passion," Father Gallen said. "It's that level of image and symbol that people mostly groove on."

He further stressed his point with the following conclusion:

"Leonard Bernstein said that the secret to jazz was *improvisation*, to get the vision and then create. May we get the vision! May we create with holy passion! May we make American music together in prayer!"

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