

COLUMNISTS

Priest recruiters try to sabotage Vatican II

There is a "party line" out there that implies that the Second Vatican Council is responsible for just about every major problem in the Catholic Church today. Nowhere is the party line more apparent than in the comments of some seminarians and newly ordained priests, and of the bishops and vocation directors who recruited them.

A recent article in *The New York Times* called attention to the success of the new archbishop of New York in recruiting priests for his former diocese of Bridgeport, Conn. The comments of his vocations director, ordained in 1987 and perhaps not even born when the Second Vatican Council opened in October 1962, are especially revealing.

"Many of [the recruits]," he pointed out, "are not getting all excited about guitar Masses and Masses on the beach."

To reduce liturgical renewal to "guitar Masses and Masses on the beach" would be to trivialize that renewal, whose basic operating principle was sacramental.

The sacraments are signs as well as causes of grace. "It is therefore of capital importance," the council's Constitution



essays in
theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

on the Sacred Liturgy declared, "that the faithful easily understand the sacramental signs" (n. 59).

But understanding the signs is only the pre-condition of liturgical renewal, namely, the active participation of the laity in the Eucharist and the other sacraments. It is only "through a proper appreciation of the rites and prayers" that the laity can "participate knowingly, devoutly, and actively" (n. 48; also n. 21).

And since the cultures and spiritual needs of people differ, the council allowed for adaptations in the celebration of the liturgy. "Even in the liturgy," it said, "the Church has no wish to impose

uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community" (n.37).

Consequently, there may be a time and place for a "guitar Mass" and even for an occasional "Mass on the beach," but they are not the point and the purpose of the council's liturgical renewal.

The next sentence *The New York Times* article attributed to the vocations director is even more revealing: "They're, to be honest, more attracted to the tradition, to the liturgical tradition, to some of the devotions of the church, rosaries, novenas and eucharistic adoration."

"To be honest," indeed, for this is what is really taking place in the Catholic Church today: the attempted hi-jacking of Vatican II by a network of Catholics who happen to hold, or have access to, the levers of ecclesiastical power.

How "traditional," in fact, are the rosary, novenas, and eucharistic adoration? Was Pope Paul VI against that "tradition" when, in his *Marialis Cultus* (1974), he insisted that the rosary, a private devotion, is not to be recited during Mass, a communal act of worship (n. 48)?

"In a sense," the vocations director continued, "the generation that's coming up now have been deprived of that tradition; they're children of the baby boomers who discarded much of that." There is "a longing for the tradition that they've missed."

People of the "coming up" generation have also been "deprived" of Model-T Fords, static-filled radios, party-line phones, manual typewriters and carbon paper, and stifling summer heat without air conditioning.

One of the new recruits summed up his theology in these words: "I do God's will by obeying my bishop."

So much for the process of discernment so spiritually crucial to "traditional" figures like St. Ignatius of Loyola. And so much for the council's teaching that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to "the faithful of every rank" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n. 12).

In the recruitment of priests, as in so many other areas of life, like attracts like.

...
Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Through Body of Christ, we love as Jesus did

Corpus Christi (June 25): (R3) Mark 14:12-16, 22-26; (R1) Exodus 24:3-8. (R2) Hebrews 9:11-15.

In all three readings for the feast of Corpus Christi, two words appear: covenant and blood.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. When both parties stipulate the terms, the covenant is bilateral. There is another kind of covenant: a unilateral one. One party sets the terms, the other party is free to accept or reject them. God's covenant with his people is like that.

Today when we make agreements, we shake hands or sign a contract. In the days before Christ, agreements were made and sealed with blood. Animals were cut in two and the parties to the agreement walked between the parts as if to say: "If I break my agreement, you can cut me in two just like these animals." In Genesis 15, Abraham's covenant with God was made that way. The very word "covenant" means "cutting in two." The animals were cut in two to seal the covenant and then eaten at a banquet to celebrate the agreement.

Covenant and blood went hand in hand, so the readings of Corpus Christ



a word
for
sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

speak of the blood of the covenant. In the Old Testament it was animal blood that was used to ratify the covenant between God and his people on Mt. Sinai. But, in the New Testament, it was the blood of Christ shed on Mt. Calvary. That is why the New Covenant, as the author of Hebrews said, is far more superior than the Old.

Blood establishes relationships, for instance, blood brothers. The Old Covenant with Israel made them God's chosen people. The New Covenant with us has made all mankind children of God. The pact with God's people was: Keep my commandments and I'll be your God and dwell among you. The pact with us is: Love one another as I

have loved you, and I will send my Holy Spirit upon you and dwell among you in the Blessed Sacrament, which is Corpus Christi, my body.

Jesus told the crowds to love one another as oneself. But to his own he said: "Love one another AS I HAVE LOVED YOU." That's a whole new standard — "to love as Jesus did!" That is why both the Holy Spirit and Corpus Christi are given to us — to enable us to do that which is humanly impossible.

Corpus Christi, the Body of Christ, is received in Holy Communion. Bread and wine on the physical level are food that refreshes, nourishes and delights the heart of man. Holy Communion on the spiritual level is the food of the soul which refreshes it, delights it, and strengthens it in the warfare with the devil.

As bread, made from many grains of wheat, and wine, from many grapes, are one, so we being many become one body through the love that is poured into our souls by Corpus Christi. Corpus Christi is the bond of unity for the Body of Christ, his church.

As ordinary food becomes one with the body, so Holy Communion unites us

to Christ and to one another through the love it pours into our hearts.

As Christ rose from the dead, Corpus Christi is the pledge of life eternal for each of us.

...
Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, June 26
2 Kings 17:5-8, 13-15, 18;
Matthew 7:1-5

Tuesday, June 27
2 Kings 19:9-11, 14-21, 31-35, 36;
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday, June 28
2 Kings 22:8-13, 23:1-3;
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday, June 29
Acts 12:1-11; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18;
Matthew 16:13-19

Friday, June 30
Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8-9;
Ephesians 3:8-12, 14-19; John 19:31-37

Saturday, July 1
Lamentations 2:2, 10-14, 18-19;
Luke 2:41-51

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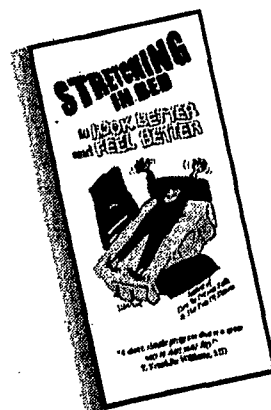
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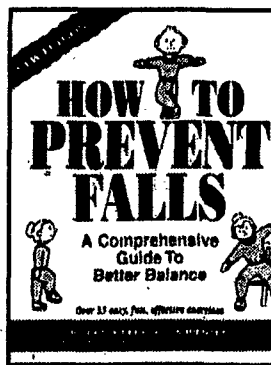
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