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THE QUESTION OF SUNDAY HIGH MASS

To participate or not to participate -- this seems to be the question; at least it is the question concerning Sunday High Masses raised in a letter to the Scholastic (November 8, 1963).

By now everyone is aware that the religious program as set up for this year calls for more active participation of the students at all Masses on the campus. While something remains to be desired in the way of enthusiastic response, the dialogue is meeting with some degree of success at all the low Masses. The best response, generally, comes in the voluntary weekday Masses at 11:30 and 5:10 in Sacred Heart Church. On Sundays the most enthusiastic response is heard at the 7:15 and 8:30 Masses. At 9:45 and 12:15 the volume of response is weak, indeed, considering the number of people at those Masses. We're aware, of course, that the enthusiasm varies with the enthusiasm of the celebrant and even with the mechanical effectiveness of the public address system. But we have reason to be hopeful that participation at low Masses will improve. The commentary -- by priests on Sunday and by students during the week -- is going well, but we realize there are defects and problems which we are striving to eliminate.

The 11:00 Sunday High Mass is another question. The writer of the letter to the Scholastic was critical of the "polyphonic cacaphony" emanating from the choir loft. "A congregation will have absolutely no inclination to utter a few scattered responses when the rest of the Mass is being performed on high by so august a body as the Glee Club." While this may be true, the congregation at the 11:00 Mass on previous Sundays had been asked to join in by alternating with the Moreau and Dujarie choirs which sing from the risers behind the main altar. The response had been so poor that the Glee Club was asked to provide the music on the Sunday of Homecoming Weekend rather than subject the visitors to our experimental, unenthusiastic congregational singing. As for the frustration of the priest director from the sanctuary -- as mentioned by the letter-writer -- it was even greater this past Sunday, when Dujarie choir was alternating with the congregation, than it had been the previous Sunday when the Glee Club sang.

What do these comments amount to? A defense of the Glee Club? Yes. It had been invited to sing. But these comments are also in the nature of self-examination because if there is lethargy on the part of the congregation, it is not the fault of the Glee Club nor

not wholly the fault of those assisting at the Mass. For one thing the hymn cards in the pews do not always have the music the congregation is asked to sing. That's our fault. We realize that many students do not know the Gregorian chant melodies. This is no one's fault. We're trying different melodies hoping to find either the one known by the most students or the one most easily learned. We realize the shortcomings and inadequacies of the directors -- as they themselves do -- but they are generously doing a job for which they admit they have no special musical qualifications. And they do have a great zeal for intelligent and enthusiastic worship of God, are willing to serve until others better qualified turn up. We realize -- and we hope the students in the congregation do -- that we are making stumbling beginnings. Perfection isn't reached in one week, one month, or even one year. Perhaps we'll have to wait for a high degree of perfection until the majority of students have been trained from parochial school days in the singing of High Masses.

Calling to your attention our problem with regard to congregational singing during High Masses on Sunday will, we hope, spur you on to give whole-hearted cooperation to the leaders of the singing. You don't have to have operatic voices. As a matter of fact, you'll join in a hootenanny without being self-conscious of the quality of your voice. Why not join in the singing at Mass, and thus become part of true community worship?

Meanwhile, if the Glee Club, or the Moreau choir, of the Dujarie choir do on occasion sing all the parts of the Mass, they will do so to give glory to God. The beauty of the music can elevate the soul, making the Mass meaningful and sanctifying more than "a few seconds past the exit" -- for those singing as they praise God with the talents God has given them and for the other worshipers because beautiful music can be a faint echo of the Heavenly choirs and hence a means of closer union not only with the Person of Christ but with the Whole Christ, Head and members.

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An Appreciative Nod to the Scholastic --

...and to Bill Staudenheimer for bringing to the attention of the student body the matter of effective community worship;
...and to Editor Tom Hoobler for seconding our efforts to have the students sing the Alma Mater at the end of Mass; (it was much better last Sunday)
...and to Prof. Michael John Crowe for his article "A Nearly Extinct Species" in which he explains the Third Order of St. Francis and the program of perfection for laymen which it sets forth.

Clothing the Naked -- Sometime before Thanksgiving the annual Bishops' clothing drive will be conducted. Here we participate through a collection in the halls. Start looking through your wardrobe for warm shirts, jackets, warm socks, shoes which you seldom wear and can easily do without.

POPE PAUL EXTOLS CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA

On the occasion of the beatification of Bishop John Neumann Pope Paul paid to sanctity in the United States a tribute which is a challenge and at the same time a source of hope to every American Catholic.

"This beatification is an excellent document which in itself dispels the erroneous belief that American Catholicism is not oriented to a singular and sublime expression of sanctity but rather toward the ordinary popular expressions of the ordinary Christian life, not dissimilar from the environment of modern life.

"Behold, America too has its saints. Yesterday it was Blessed Seton who was raised to the altars, the guide and symbol of the splendid company of chosen women consecrated to Christ who are like tireless bees, 'apes argumentosae,' intent on building the great hive of the American Church.

"Today, it is Bishop Neumann whom We venerate as a blessed and who opens before Us a twofold vision: That of the many Americans, heroes of faith and charity, who are equally worthy of mounting the altars. Our Secretary of State Amleto Cardinal Cicognani has written a book entitled Sanctity in America, which proves it.

"It is that of a sanctity no longer individual but collective, no longer restricted to individual cases but shared by numerous groups of faithful, no longer of one but of many, the sanctity of a people.

"Is it possible that today in this our modern world, so profane and so tainted by unbelief and vice, the sanctity of a people should have been produced, and precisely in America? The sanctity of which St. Peter spoke: 'You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people' (I, Peter 2:9).

"This is Our trust, Our hope.

"When We see certain manifestations of American Catholic life, the parishes, the schools, the universities, the hospitals, the missions; when We observe the spirit of faith and sacrifice underlying these works; when We feel the profound and solid union linking those Catholics to the Catholic Church; when We have before Us priests and Religious who reflect the example of John Neumann, how great a trust, how great a hope fills Our soul!"

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IN YOUR CHARITY please pray for the following: Ill -- grandfather of Peter Doris of Howard; friend of Dick Stritter, Off-Campus; Tom Dunlay, president of the San Fernando Valley Notre Dame Alumni Club; Capt. Humbert Versace, friend of Fr. Francis Nealy, O.P. (shot and captured by Viet Cong in Viet Nam). Deceased -- mother of James W. O'Neal of Morrissey; father of Henry Schmid of Zahm.

Fresh from the Pad

ARE YOU IN THE SWIM?

You're excited when a class is tangy, exhilarated when sports are competitive, satisfied when dating is fun-filled. Yet, at other times, classes are a drag and uninteresting, ("The prof's dead"), and dating dull and flat, ("There's no girl around worth spending money on"), and competitive sports are boring and a waste of time, ("It's too strenuous"). Don't your different reactions spell out one thing -- you're really satisfied only when you throw yourself into the middle of things. And you're listless only when you look at these activities from the outside -- through a window, when you are apart, when you are detached.

It's no wonder the Christian life is so dull and unchallenging. It holds out no satisfying value. It's a complex of empty rituals. And the ideal of goodness is looked-upon as a hangover from childhood -- an ancestral code of taboos. Not only is such a way of life dull but the hypocrisy of it all completely revolts you.

Honestly, have you ever let yourself experience the dynamic alchemy of the Christian life? Have you ever lived, for a day, this profound mystery? Have you dug your teeth into its ageless challenge? Since "coming of age" have you jumped into the swim of your Baptism and experienced in every pore and nerve-end the Christian paradox -- that you must die to live?

As long as you sit snugly and smugly on the outside of the Baptismal pool, the Christian life will most certainly remain dull, flat, ritualistic and mechanical. And you're so right -- you are in every sense a hypocrite because a Christian means living this mystery in your own flesh and blood today --1963-- on this campus. Its fierce dynamics don't consist in wearing a medal, saying a Hail Mary before a test, or standing inside a certain building for 38 minutes every Sunday morning.

-- Fr. Baker

P.S. It's impossible to experience the joy of swimming if you never throw yourself in the water.