



1968

A Phenomenological Study of Behavioral Change Attitudes Toward the New Liturgy

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Recommended Citation

Jankauskas, John J., "A Phenomenological Study of Behavioral Change Attitudes Toward the New Liturgy" (1968). *Master's Theses*. Paper 2299.
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**A Phenomenological Study of Behavioral Change
Attitudes Toward the New Liturgy**

by

John J. Jankauskas

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts**

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION - PURPOSE OF THESIS, PROCEDURE REVIEW OF RELEVANT PSYCHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II (1963) states:

"Every liturgical celebration is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can match its claim to efficacy, nor equal the degree of it." (par. 7)

"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows." (par. 10)

"The liturgy in its turn inspires the faithful to become 'of one heart in love'..." (par. 10)

"It is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit." (par. 14)

These quotations express well my convictions about the liturgy. With enthusiasm I worked to introduce and develop active participation at Mass at St. Rose of Lima Church. I experienced the joy and satisfaction of achieving my goal.

But then, questions began coming to my mind as a result of my psychological studies. What is the precise worth of the liturgy as experienced by the people? Is it possible for me to make a study of the community of which I am a part? What insights would I gain that I do not already possess? What behavioral change has taken place in the people with whom I worshipped Sunday after Sunday? This study seeks to answer such

questions. The study originated in a very natural way. I began listening to what people had to say. The present study then received impetus at one of our CFM meetings when one of the men popped the question as to why we had so much Latin in the Mass - that he did not like it - and all the people began expressing themselves on this and other topics of the Mass. I tape-recorded the session and when listening to it later, it suddenly occurred to me that it was a real privilege for me to gain insight into the layman's view of participation. I began multiplying interviews with a great variety of people. The more I multiplied them, the more I learned about participation. These interviews really awakened a new world for me, uncovered ideas I thought could be helpful to everyone. This is the way a phenomenological study of active participation at Mass began.

My method of study of the behavioral change toward the liturgy will be akin to studies such as Stanton and Schwartz (1954) on the effects of the hospital social structure on the mental health of patients and Mayo (1945) and Roethlisberger (1939) of communication patterns in organizations. Stanton and Schwartz gathered their data as participant-observers in the hospital setting. Mayo and Roethlisberger described one of their methods for gathering data as a living-in-method of observation by which members of a small group were interviewed and observed for a period of years. In this manner the clinical observers got the "feel" of the group and were able to make subjective judgments about communication patterns.

In the Church it is possible to examine any serious question from a kind of twofold aspect which embraces both a "hierarchical" pole and a "community" pole. But, indeed,

the Church must examine itself from this dual aspect if it is to avoid the "ivory tower" approach to the realities of life" -- a thought so well developed by Yves Congar in his classic book Lay People in the Church. (1959)

In our day we have witnessed the remarkable work of the hierarchy at Vatican II. The culmination of their work on the liturgy resulted in a document -- the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. But what about the community? Karl Rahner (1959) in his book Free Speech in the Church stresses the importance of knowing the precise situation at hand, when it comes to the people, or the immediate community: people's desires, feelings, emotions, worries... what their problems are... what they find difficult... to what extent their feelings have changed... where they find the traditional answers or rulings insufficient.

This is what the present work attempts to do regarding certain aspects of the liturgy. We will look at the liturgy then, from a somewhat different perspective; this viewpoint is the "community" pole -- that is, what is often so patronizingly referred to as the "grass-roots" approach. What does the hierarchy teach on such points of the liturgy? What does the community of the faithful feel about these same questions?

Obviously it will profit the Church to look at things from many vantage points. The vantage point of the layman is not the least of those. Christ said, "I know mine." And so bishops and priests too desire to know their "sheep", but all too rarely do we know what is in the mind and heart of the layman -- because he will almost never express himself unless we ask him. Centuries ago St. Cyprian said, plainly enough, "I would not make a decision without the consent and assent of the laity", - a sentiment echoed through

those centuries and into our own times by many bishops. With this thought in mind we dare lay bare our own awarenesses of the Mass as they appear to us. What we say we owe largely to the people who are the mind and heart of St. Rose of Lima parish.

We will take a look at the Mass with and without active participation, using a clinical and experiential approach which does not speculate on what things might be, or what we would want them to be, but seeks rather to discover what they actually are: What has meaning for the people? What do people enjoy? What bores them?

We asked laymen to express themselves freely. Often we cite their very words, express their thoughts, draw conclusions from them. We seek then, to find ways to make the Mass more meaningful, more alive, more effective in the lives of these people.

If Catholics should find in the Mass the strength and inspiration to Catholic action and rich Christian living, how can they if their attitude towards the Mass is expressed in such terms as:

"Well, I was there in Church, but was I really at Mass? I fulfilled my obligation. "

Nor will Catholic leadership spring from the Mass when the Mass generates such descriptions as "watch the priest move around the altar" - "I'd say the rosary and look at somebody else's hat and notice who had a new dress and finally I would look at my watch and then I was out. I was through for another week" - "dull hour" - "drag. "

Admittedly this is an intensive study of one parish. Yet what may seem to be uniquely ours is undoubtedly shared by all - or surely, by many - parishes. This is in accord with the findings of a noted psychologist, Carl R. Rogers, (1960) who says "...that what is

most personal and unique in each one of us is probably the very element which would, if it were shared or expressed, speak most deeply to others. "

And so, on reading some of the quotations included here, many people have found that a kind of dialogue took place with themselves: "Why, that man said just what I feel but never said. " Or, "I really disagree with that one. " And, "On many of these pages I almost suspect you are quoting me. "

Before any idea can become a reality in our lives, it is prerequisite for us to internalize the idea. Perhaps a canon lawyer can internalize a legal document, but for most of us this is extraordinarily difficult. This study then, is intended to help ordinary people, sometimes priests, sometimes laymen, to internalize the decree. In another sense we will try to appeal to any person interested in finding out how other people go about their method of worshiping at Mass.

The reactions and emotions expressed by so many others in this study - and I can substantiate them all from much the same experience in two other big city parishes - prove that for the layman, active participation is no mere passing fancy by any twisting of the imagination. Now that the Constitution on the Liturgy has given the marching orders, the clergy ought to take heart from the genuine enthusiasm expressed herein. The Council decree opens doors - to research, to challenge, to the search for grass-roots feelings, reactions and insights. It gives direction to further studies of the liturgy as it is actually felt by the community, people and priest.

A public invitation was extended to all parishioners to participate in the program. Many were approached personally to set up gatherings in their homes. It was suggested that the host couple or individual invite six to eight people, whomever they desired. A good cross-section of parishioners was interviewed. I attended all the gatherings.

383 people in forty-five groups were interviewed. Each group ranged in size from six to twelve people. Some persons were individually interviewed. The breakdown according to age was as follows: Teenagers, 10%, 21-34, 44%, 35-54, 28%, over 55, 18%. According to marital status: Single, 21%, married, 74%, widows, 5%. 45% of those interviewed were men (155 men, 191 women, 13 boys, 24 girls).

This is a study of a good cross-section of parishioners who were asked for their views on participation - admittedly inadequate for a detailed statistical analysis of active participation.

People knew in advance only the general topic of discussion -- Active Participation as You have Experienced It at St. Rose of Lima Parish. No specific questions were asked. The general topic was announced. Everyone felt free to express themselves on the topic whenever they chose. No one was pressured to speak. Eventually everyone became involved in the conversation. General topics treated in this study were covered adequately without any further questioning on the moderator's part, with the exception of their views on the subject of the lay commentators and evaluation of the meeting at the very end.

Some discussions I really preferred to reproduce at great length, but instead chose to group selected quotations under various topics for the sake of clarity. We were not in-

terested in any statistical count of the numbers for or against participation, Latin, etc. but simply sought an expression of their feelings on whatever points they mentioned.

The moderator attempted to place himself in their position, applying the techniques of group counseling as explained by Rev. Charles Curran (1952) in his book, Counseling in Catholic Life and Education.

The meeting was rather loosely structured; but an important part of the moderator's role was to recognize and reflect the feelings expressed, yet in no way to act the part of a teacher. Near the end of a few meetings, I switched from the role of one who was seeking to learn and understand to the role of teacher. The results were unfavorable as far as rapport was concerned between priest and people. People did not seem to like this and preferred that I stay in the role I had chosen for the evening. I found the counseling technique for group discussion a very successful way of approaching people.

A great number of group discussions antecedent and consequent to the interviews used took place. I visited the homes of countless numbers of parishioners. There, too, I listened to expressions relative to active participation parallel to those recorded in this work. Many volunteered information to me as I greeted them after Mass in front of the church Sunday after Sunday. Others expressed themselves to the men commentators. None of this unrecorded material is part of this study although it substantiates the recorded work.

St. Rose of Lima is one of the few parishes in our archdiocese that had participation prior to the recent decrees of Pope Pius XII, Vatican Council II and of our own Albert Cardinal Meyer. Our participation dates back sixteen years. It was introduced into the

parish during the pastorate of the late Rev. Francis W. Glynn. It continued to flourish and mature under the direction of the late Rev. James Brian Fleming. The success of the program of participation I share with my fellow assistants, Rev. John Fearon, with whom we began participation and more recently, the Rev. Charles Ezerskis who stepped into the role of extending the program with much enthusiasm. Public statements of compliment and appreciation from visiting priests and missionaries proved very helpful and encouraging to the people. A variable factor difficult to measure, but of immeasurable importance, is the enthusiasm of priests for active participation at Mass.

The parish consists of approximately 1,000 families. Within our parish boundaries approximately one and one-half square miles, there are eight nationality parishes, two Uniate parishes, three Protestant churches and an Orthodox church - a neighborhood where people have a choice of going to different churches. Many parishes are within walking distance for most people. It is a working-class neighborhood. Only a few professional people are numbered among our parishioners.

Behavioral change through active participation has been studied by many. Some studies are phenomenological in approach. Others study the natural setting with questionnaires and interviews and with statistical methods arrive at meaningful data. One finds a greater number of controlled experiments on attitude or opinion change.

When the environment or social situation of a person is changed, the behavior of a person is affected. As a person becomes a participant in a changed situation, his attitudes become modified.

In any situation many factors interplay. The reactions of the laity at Catholic worship are a complex phenomena. One can hypothesize that changes in religious attitudes would occur as a result of ritual changes. At St. Rose of Lima Church changes in the liturgy were introduced without consultation with the laity. A value judgment was made by the clergy - active participation at Mass is beneficial for the people. Community song and prayer was imposed upon the congregation. Similarly the changes in the liturgy were decreed by the bishops on a worldwide scale. People had no choice but to conform. What were the effects?

Bettelheim (1943), Frankl, (1959) and Schein (1959), studied the forced situation of a concentration camp and described the profound psychological effects in both the thinking and behavior of the prisoners. There was no escape from the new prison environment. It affected the prisoners deeply.

Frankl's observation in particular is worth noting - the prisoner's attitude toward prison life was significant. It meant the difference between life and death. Some prisoners were able to integrate the cruel prison experience meaningfully into their life. Others succumbed to it. This suggests some interesting questions regarding the liturgy. We observed that some parishioners integrated the new liturgy into their life quickly, meaningfully, with enthusiasm. They approached the changes creatively and made them meaningful for themselves. Others were overwhelmed and disorganized by them. Varied feelings of boredom and emptiness cling to the worship of some. Why did the liturgy become meaningful for some and not for others? Was there any difference in attitude on the part of

parishioners as they approached Sunday Mass? Are personality factors significant? Is freedom a relevant factor? Does one participate from blind obedience and the others the result of a free commitment? Some became a part of a worshipping people, others remain part of a participating crowd. It is important for a person to experience for himself the value and inner reasonableness of community worship. Only when he sees for himself, only then do negative attitudes and feelings abandon him. Two things are important for behavioral change in regard to the liturgy - the ritual change and the person's attitude toward the change. The two facts interact. Studies in other fields illustrate similar factors at work.

Roger Wilson (1963), studied the effects of a change of residence upon a person's attitudes. He relates the effects upon a family moving into a Housing Project from a slum area. Personality and environmental factors interact on each other in the setting of new housing estates. "Various complex factors are at work, personal psychological characteristics, traditional class attitudes, family economic circumstances, family social aspirations, feelings about the idea of neighborhood, assumptions of those with political and economic power about human nature and what is good for people." Sociological influences affect people. What they feel about these influences is likewise of importance. The stress and strain that result from the change effect the person, his family, values, etc.

I note the study on the effect of a change of residence upon people so that I do not minimize the importance of the environmental factor regarding behavioral change. This confirms the importance of changing the liturgical setting if one is to modify the religious attitudes of people. It does make a difference if Mass is celebrated in Church or in a

home, the altar far removed from the people or close at hand. It does make a difference whether the priest faces the people or he faces the wall, whether lay people are participating as lectors and commentators in the sanctuary or are excluded from the sanctuary. The study also calls attention to this - what people feel about sociological influences is important. Some liturgists overstress the value of liturgical change without advertence to the importance of what people feel about the changes. This present study shows the importance of people's feelings and attitudes resulting from changes in the liturgy.

Everett Hagen (1963), explains social change as a result of withdrawal of status by society from a significant segment of the population. Authoritarian personalities, hierarchic social structure and culture tend to replicate themselves generation after generation. Personality formation in children undergoes a change if alterations in the social organization of a society change the values and needs of adults. The historical sequence is authoritarianism, withdrawal of status and respect from a group, retreatism of this group, increase of creativity in this group resulting in economic development. Tsar of Russia of 1650's, Sixteenth Century feudal groups in Japan, and the Antioquenos from 1530 to present are cited as examples of this historical sequence.

John Kunkel (1963), disagrees with Hagen's explanation of social change that personality change occurs prior to social change. He cites the events which occurred on the Vicos hacienda in Peru. Changes were brought about in the activities of the peasants without previous changes in character. By simply changing several reinforcing and aversive stimuli (e.g. by abolishing required personal services to the patron and instituting a

system of wages.) the Cornell group under Holmberg changed not only the activities in which the Indians engaged, but also their attitudes and philosophy of life. The behavioral changes occurred in a 5 - 6 year period. Hagen accents the importance of personality factors in social change. Kunkel highlights the importance of environmental factors.

What historical factors brought about the liturgical changes in the Church? What psychological factors in the clergy or laity? Personality factors? The secular situation of society? We can only ask the questions that suggest themselves here from Hagen's and Kunkel's studies.

Just simply to walk into a new environment and live in it for a while results in an assimilation of some of the prevalent attitudes of that environment. This The Theodore M. Newcomb (1958), study shows. Do the opinions of authority figures and other significant individuals have a bearing on attitude change? We noted that the enthusiasm of the clergy for community worship was important. Visiting clergy's reactions were helpful. When parishioners stepped into the role of commentator, lector, the people were more accepting of liturgical changes. The singing of a large group of men as a unit in the congregation facilitated the acceptance of community singing by the parish. This is not unlike Theodore Newcomb's study. He studied the entire student body from 1935-1939 regarding the attitude of the students toward public affairs. He found attitude shifting from freshman conservatism to senior non-conservatism. In this community, individual prestige as symbolized by leaders and dominant groups was associated with non-conservatism. The Bennington's findings illustrate the effect of a community's approved attitudes upon an in-

dividual's attitude development.

Sills (1961), climate of opinion studies show something similar. He reports on the effect of the school milieu - high school climate upon the number of students who go to college. He discusses the importance of ability and family background and adds that the particular climate of the school and community is a relevant factor.

The Martian broadcast study by Hadley Cantil (1958), shows that differences in personality factors resulted in different reactions to the broadcast. We already raised the question whether personality differences account for the difference in people's reaction to the new liturgy.

All of these studies show that a modification of the social situation or environmental setting results in some behavioral change. It would be reasonable to expect changes of attitudes in the people's outlook regarding the Mass when a change is introduced into the ritual structure requiring an active verbalized participation in the liturgy.

In his studies Goodwin (1966), discusses the relation of action of persons to the guiding of social change. An individual undergoes alteration by action through time when he is involved as a participant in any on-going situation. A person not only reacts to the environment but acts upon it and in the process changes himself and the environment. He synthesizes well what is taking place in Catholic worship. The ritual structure is changed. A person participates in this new worship situation. He reacts to it. It does affect him deeply. His reactions will cause further changes in the liturgy. Worship is being pruned of dead rituals and is coming alive.

Now I want to point out the importance of actual participation in an activity as a relevant factor in attitude or opinion change. When a person is a participant in a social situation, he is affected by the situation. His attitudes are strengthened or modified.

Arnold M. Rose (1959), surveyed through a questionnaire, the migrants coming to Minneapolis and found that the greater the participation of a person in organized activity the greater the internalization of the cultural values and meanings.

The Journal of Education Research (1950), reports the effect of giving field work to a group of leaders in youth-serving agencies. The experience affected favorably the students' attitudes toward youth behavior and attitudes of well-adjusted students toward themselves.

In the area of racial prejudice, Gordon W. Allport (1958), reports three experiments of integrated housing. When Negro and white neighbors are jointly active in community enterprises, a more friendly, less fearful and less stereotyped view of Negroes by whites results. Mere zonal residential contact does not lessen tension. It even increases it unless there is active interaction between Negroes and whites. Only the type of contact that leads people to do things together is likely to result in changed attitudes.

The Research Branch of the Information and Education Division of the United States Army (1949), reports that white soldiers had a more favorable disposition toward Negro soldiers when they had an experience of common participation. Joint activity lessens prejudice.

Rachel Dubois (1950), successfully used a neighborhood festival technique to lessen prejudice. Common projects and cooperative endeavor leads to improvement of community

relationships.

Lloyd Cook (1950), reports that indirect approaches are more successful in lessening prejudice. By indirect is meant programs that do not specialize in the study of minority groups as such nor focus on phenomena of prejudice but rather engage the student to lose himself in community projects as "he participates in realistic situations and develops" as William Janis would say, acquaintance with the field rather than knowledge about the field.

Hubert Bonner (1959, p. 155), in his book Group Dynamics concludes "insight in intergroup relations is best achieved by means of the free participation of peoples of different racial and ideological backgrounds in common activities. "

The results of the Deutsch-Collins (1952, p. 592), survey show that if persons of different ethnic groups have equal status contacts, prejudice between them is effectively diminished. "The net gain resulting from the integrated projects is considerable; from the same point of view, the gain created by the segregated bi-racial projects is slight. "

This series of studies shows the importance of having people participate in a common activity. It influences behavior. Attitudinal changes result. Opinions are modified.

One of the chief factors that has been introduced into the Mass is congregational participation in prayer and song. The results of participation in a religious activity are clearly shown in the people's comments on such points as interest, factor of time, feeling of community, lessening of distractions, etc. If participation in a common activity with

Negroes changes a person's attitude toward Negroes, we would expect some significant changes to occur in the people who participate in a religious activity.

The following studies indicate the significance of group discussion in modifying behavior. No program of widespread group discussion on the liturgy apart from this study was inaugurated on the liturgy at St. Rose of Lima Church. One can only surmise what discussions took place in informal reference groups. Since all the studies in this series show the positive value of group discussions, one wonders or can question why small group discussion techniques have not been applied extensively to worship in the Church. Each study opens to question the past methodology of the Church and suggests applications to parish structure and activity.

A group in whatever form - whether large or small - informal or institutionalized - molds an individual's attitudes, behavior, personality.

Everett K. Wilson (1954), describes a community discussion program in the Fall of 1948, at Antioch College, with the purpose of involving all members of the community in discussion and formation of college policy. It was felt that "the most effective form of social control and social change was that which enlisted the thoughtful participation of all normal adults within the community, regardless of diverse backgrounds and differing competence." The study attempts to discover the attributes that are concomitants of participation such as friendship, sex, age, academic endeavor. Certain educational outcomes may be related to these discussion processes. There is slight evidence that those who participated were more identified with the community in contrast to a self-centered, self-gratifying orientation. This study suggests the use of a parish discussion program for in-

augurating renewal of a parish. An interesting experiment for someone to undertake.

Trager and Radke (1951), describe a three year project in the Philadelphia public schools. The resistance to change on the part of the teachers was substantially reduced by giving them an opportunity to participate in a cooperative group process. The value of sharing a program with others and developing it through discussion was demonstrated in the relationship of the clergy, organist and other key lay leaders at St. Rose of Lima.

My relationship with two organists illustrates the value of sharing the development of a program with another and the negative reaction one experiences when a person feels not actively involved in a program. This is the way they tell it in their own words.

"I felt a leader... I felt very much a part of the whole thing. I thought the program was God-centered rather than Father-fashioned. By Father-fashioned I mean this is what Father wants, therefore I have to do it because it's my job and Father wants it. We were both working towards the same goal with mutual understanding. You gave me a free hand from the musical standpoint and some of the psychological approach... Really, you made me feel that 98% of the music program was mine."

"The attitude of the priest should be one of not telling the organist what to do, but working more or less with her and not talking down to her... working with the organist. Maybe I'm not as competent in all the ways of the former organist -- but there must be SOMETHING we could do together if you were interested in this goal. There must be something that I could contribute to it. Even an inferior organist, if she was the poorest example of a musician that has ever come along... the worst thing you could ever do is cut her off or let her think she's not of any use around here. If you would include her in on it, she might be inspired to greater heights. She might be inspired to go into the subject more deeply if she or he was included as part of it."

A group of men were actively engaged in discussing an implementation of the program of participation at Mass. Their attitude is well illustrated by the following comment:

"We were the key of it... We showed that it isn't the chosen few that are the backbone of the Church... It's the rank and file as we proved here. "

Sharing a program with others generates enthusiasm and interest. Our experience reflects the positive values of group discussion described by Trager and Radke, Everett K. Wilson and many others.

Participation in group discussion and group decision facilitates change of attitude. Kurt Lewin's (1952), experiments showed that participation through discussion led to a change of attitude toward food. One group listened to a lecture without participating in discussion. The other group was given the opportunity to discuss the problem. Only 3% of the first group served the food. 32% of the second group served the meat to the family.

Ronald Lippitt and Ralph White (1939), under the guidance of Kurt Lewin made a study of the different types of leadership and their effect upon the groups, authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire. Leadership which allowed participation resulted in changed attitudes, the members were more personal and friendly, more group-minded. Individuals under authoritarian leadership were either more aggressive in their behavior or more apathetic. Likewise Preston and Heintz (1949), found that changes in group opinion were more easily effected by means of participatory leadership and group members were more satisfied with the changes resulting from member-leader deliberations.

All of these studies lead to many interesting questions regarding the liturgy. Is apathy in the Church the result of authoritarian leadership? What manner of leadership is reflected in our present day worship? Is authoritarian-democratic leadership the variable factor that in part accounts for varying degrees of success in active participation at Mass at different parishes? Would we have a better rapport between the clergy and laity if small group discussions became prevalent in a parish? Such questions are beyond the scope of the present study.

R. S. Calvert's (1956), studies show that the employee's attitude is the key whether an employee will speak favorably about his company to his community. Facts and figures are helpful once his attitude is formed. He found that movies were most valuable when followed by a discussion. There was a universal resistance to bare facts and figures. Thousands of employees were placed in group discussion meetings to learn about the company's financial problems. When there was little discussion and the leader talked most, belief in the company's position was weak. When there were two way discussions, employees acquired a strong company position.

Cartwright (1951), reports that in a series of experiments directed by Lewin it was found that a method of group decision, in which the group as a whole made a decision to have its members change their behavior, was from two to ten times as effective in producing actual change as was a lecture presenting exhortation to change. "We have yet to learn precisely what produces these differences of effectiveness but it is clear that by introducing group forces into the situation a whole new level of influence has been achieved. "

Recent experiments by Coch and French (1948), have clearly demonstrated that the productivity of work groups can be greatly increased by methods of work organization and supervision which gives more responsibility to work groups, which allow for fuller participation in important decision, and which make stable groups the firm basis for support of the individual's social needs.

A few years ago the Research Center for Group Dynamics undertook to shed light on this problem by investigating the operation of a workshop for training leaders in intercultural relations. In a project, directed by Lippitt (1949), it set out to compare systematically the different effects of the workshop upon trainees who came as isolated individuals in contrast to those who came as teams. Six months after the workshop, however, those who had been trained as isolates were only slightly more active in community affairs than before the workshop, whereas those who had been members of strong training teams were now much more active. In-groups in our parish shared in some of the planning to varying degrees. Were people who shared somewhat in formal and informal discussion on the liturgy more positively disposed toward active participation at Mass than those who had no discussion contact with the clergy? It would seem so.

The chances for re-education seem to be increased whenever a strong we-feeling is created. Recent experiments by Preston and Heintz (1949), have demonstrated greater changes of opinions among members of discussion groups operating with participatory leadership than among those with supervisory leadership.

Strong pressure for changes in the group can be established by creating a shared perception by members of the need for change, thus making the source of pressure for change lie within the group. Marrow and French (1945), report a dramatic case-study which illustrates this principle quite well. A manufacturing concern had a policy against hiring women over thirty because it was believed that they were slower, more difficult to train, and more likely to be absent. The staff psychologist was able to present to management, evidence that this belief was clearly unwarranted at least within their own company. The psychologist's facts, however, were rejected and ignored as a basis for action because they violated accepted beliefs. It was claimed that they went against the direct experience of the foremen. Then the psychologist hit upon a plan for achieving change which differed drastically from the usual one of argument, persuasion, and pressure. He proposed that management conduct its own analysis of the situation. With his help, management collected all the facts which they believed were relevant to the problem. When the results were in they now had their own facts rather than those of some "outside" expert. Policy was immediately changed without further resistance. In retrospect there was much to be desired in the way participation was introduced at St. Rose of Lima Church in the light of these studies. Participation at Mass was imposed upon the parish without the consent of the people. What would have been the reaction of the people if the parish as a whole had a hand in introducing it at the level of deliberation and decision? There is a joy and satisfaction in exercising responsibility for originating something. If the introduction of active participation at Mass had been the product of the entire parish, would appreciation of

community worship been at a deeper level? It's supposed to be our Mass, but is it?

Metnick and McGinnies (1950), reports a greater retention of induced opinion change in seeing a film, then discussing it for 30 minutes.

James Richard describes an experiment -- in the use of group-centered leadership in a factory -- reported in Gordon's (1955), book on Group Centered Leadership. Participation resulted in psychological growth of individuals and development of strong group cohesiveness.

Wilson (1954), in his study describes the value of active participation in group deliberation and its effect upon the people, that they are more sensitive to group pressures, and to the well-being of others.

L. Festinger and H.H. Kelley (1951), report in their study of Regent Hill, a government housing project established after World War II, that "people who live in a community against their will, like people in any group who have nothing to say concerning their fate, will have little or no interest in its welfare."

Homan's (1950), data on the Bank Wireman study leads one to the hypothesis that the more members interact with one another, the more they are led to participate in a common activity. The more people share one another's feelings, sentiments, and attitudes, the more likely they are to behave as a group working toward the same end.

Hadley (1936), reports a greater positive change in appraisals of poems after classroom discussion than after silent reading.

Cartwright (1951), observes "A workshop not infrequently develops keen interest among the participants, high morale and enthusiasm, and a firm resolve on the part of many to apply all the wonderful insights back home. But what happens back home? The trainee discovers that his colleagues don't share his enthusiasm."

Is this one of the reasons why we cannot transfer our enthusiasm to others? Community worship means so much to us who have been deeply involved in introducing it but it doesn't seem to matter that much to others.

All of these studies show the value of group discussion. They point to the need of incorporating discussion techniques into the liturgy if community prayer is to effectively motivate human behavior. This study shows that discussion methods were used only to a minimal degree.

Without doubt, this study itself, based on group discussion techniques, had a positive effect on people's attitudes. Many of the values of group discussion were apparent to some degree in the participants.

Everyone enjoyed the evening. All looked forward to another similar discussion on this or other topics in a parallel way. It's a key that can unlock many doors. People felt honored to be asked for their opinions.

Let us evaluate the meeting in terms of the very language of the people. Of what were they most appreciative? Informal atmosphere, the atmosphere of acceptance.

"It's been very informal. It gave me a feeling of letting off steam. You listened to what we had to say. I enjoyed it. I felt you wouldn't get sore if I really told you what I felt. I thought it was helpful."

"I spoke among my type of people. I didn't have to be afraid to say this or that."

A very common reflection was:

"I've learned a lot. I thoroughly enjoyed it."

It was a help to people to discover that others felt the same way.

"I thought I was the only one who felt my way and now I know there are others. It gave me an outlet for my feelings."

"I found that I wasn't the only one who had different opinions on the way things should be in the Church."

"I like to hear what other people think."

"I enjoyed it and it's good to hear other people's point of view and to know that they think along similar lines."

"I find that this is a very pleasant thing -- to hear the opinions of others."

Although the evening was not structured for teaching, people seemed to learn much from one another; thus, statements such as -- "I have learned something from this" -- "I have learned a lot that I didn't know when I came in" -- were spoken frequently. A change of attitude toward the priest occurred. It created an atmosphere where people now feel more at ease in coming to a priest. I broke down a barrier.

"Anything that can be done to change my attitude toward the Church is good. I felt it was too stiff and formal; that I had to learn everything that was going on in order to become a part of the setup. This was a kind of imposed thing that I had no way of changing or talking about. It was supposed to be done this way and there was no questioning it. If nothing, this evening has shown me that I can express myself freely. What comes of it is another story. At least I've had an opportunity to talk about some of my feelings."

A change of attitude toward the priest seems to be very significant.

"There ought to be an effort made toward creating an atmosphere for those of us who do not have much know-how in the ways of the Church. I now feel more at ease in coming to a priest and asking questions about the Church. The thing that happened here this evening is that a barrier has been broken down between you and myself. Now I feel I can speak to you more freely about questions on my mind. Tonight was of great value to me in the sense that I have an entirely different feeling about you as a person and a priest. Now I can talk to you about anything. While you stepped out, I was telling the group that I have known you for ten years, but there always has been kind of a block between us. We talked about generalities but I never got close to you in any way. We've never gotten into anything controversial because of many fears on my part."

"Any opportunity where a lay person can get together on intimate terms with the priest is always good. It is instilled throughout your life that a priest is a man of God. You owe him a certain respect. He is so much above you. You never attribute to him the same fears, passions that you have. In this setting you are more one of us. I do feel much warmer towards you than I have in the past. I'm still going to have a great love and respect for you as a priest, but at the same time I find we can love you as a man after this. Before we respected you because it was required by reason of what you are, not because you earned it."

"I'm sure you would go a lot further in reaching people on a more relaxed and informal basis. I am even more enthused about going to Church now than I have been, if this is possible, and it is possible because of this evening's session. There should be more opportunities where the priest can meet more informally with people."

"This puts life back into the Church. The impression that most of us have about the Church are its stiffness, its unquestionability. Not that we want to break this down; there is a certain sense of security in that. There has not been enough thought put into taking the routine out of going to Church and putting things in such a way that people would understand better and maybe become a part of the Church. I think, as we keep preaching democracy, keep preaching participation, it could become a mockery if this is all one-sided. If we don't have an opportunity to convey our feelings, that we don't feel 'Gee, I was

"part of this, or we discussed this. I am a part of it.' This is the true meaning of democracy. As soon as it gets dictatorial then we are lost. I do want it to be flexible enough to fit my needs for the Church to be attuned to and aware of my needs. If the Church gives this feeling of rigidity, that there is no opportunity for change, or even to voice an opinion, you're going to lose those people who can't meet the rules or laws that were set centuries ago for a set of situations that took place at that time."

"This is completely different from anything I have ever done. It's very different from what we had in the Church before -- organizations with very pious names or social clubs. This is different."

"I think you should do this more often. I have never heard of a thing like this and I've always associated myself far away from the average priest. Now I feel much closer to him."

"Yes, it creates a better atmosphere around the Church. The Church is not that distant from me." It breaks down the barrier to a priest, the stiff, formal image of the Church." "This gives a feeling of participation to the people." Such an informal atmosphere was very enjoyable and acceptable to the people where they felt free to talk and not be swayed in any direction. They valued such an atmosphere. It's good for people to "blow off steam" at the same time they learn much. They discover kindred feelings in others. They have an image of a priest then, not the "census taker", the "financier making collections", not the "autocratic teacher", but someone who asks them questions seeking to understand them. It was an experiment that can find application in many ways, a means that can put life back into the Church, a new way for a priest to relate to his parishioners, perhaps the key to re-structuring the whole parish, abandoning the organizational based parish to one without organization, but structured in this informal way.

Besides group discussion, role playing is an effective method of inducing changes of attitudes and opinions. It provides insight into attitudes and feelings as it reproduces certain essential features of real life settings and furnishes practice in interpersonal relations.

We now summarize a number of studies on the value of role playing.

Data of Lieberman's (1956), experiments support that hypothesis that an individual's attitudes are influenced by the role he occupies in his group. Workers were elevated to foreman, then returned to their status as workmen. Attitudes shifted with the change in roles. A shift of attitude resulted in two ushers when they became lay commentators. They changed from open opposition to enthusiastic acceptance. Three other men began to attend Mass regularly when they accepted the role of commentator.

I.L. Janis and B.T. King (1954), show that the outer conformity affects inner conformity. A greater amount of opinion change was observed when subjects were induced to play the role of communicator attempting to convince others with arguments and conclusions than those who were allowed to remain passive members of audience merely reading or listening material. The change was all the more significant when a person gave spontaneous additions and elaborations of argument.

Janis and Mann (1965), report that emotional role playing is more effective than listening to tape recorders. Culbertson (1957), similarly reports a modification of attitude through writing persuasive essays effects change of attitude.

Myers (1921), claims that a number of the "chronic kickers" at an Army camp during the first World War showed a marked improvement in morale as a result of their participation

in a public speaking course where they were under competitive pressure to invent speeches favorable to Army life: "They kept at this boosting for several class periods until they really began to believe what they were saying and to act accordingly."

Role playing, as a device for inducing changes in attitude, has recently been introduced into adult education reported by Zander (1944), and Lippitt (1944), leadership training programs as studied by Lippitt (1943), employee counseling in the work of Bavelas (1947), and group psychotherapy by Moreno (1946).

Janis (1965), interviewed a group of collegiate debaters who, as members of an organized team, repeatedly were required to express publicly views that did not necessarily correspond to their personal convictions. Most of the debaters reported that they frequently ended up by accepting the conclusions which they had been arbitrarily assigned to defend. This phenomenon suggests that "saying is believing" - that overtly expressing an opinion in conformity to social demands will influence the individual's private convictions.

Janis and King (1954), in their experiment found support for this conclusion: active participation induced by role playing tends to augment the effectiveness of a persuasive communication. They compared the opinion changes of two groups: a) "Active participants" who were induced to play a role which required them to deliver a persuasive communication to others, and b) "Passive controls" who merely read and listened to the same communication.

A study by Kelman (1953), clearly favors the improvisation factor as the more important one in mediating the observed effects of active participation. Subjects who give

an improvised talk will be more influenced by the persuasive communication than those who engage in oral reading or in silent reading.

Overt verbalization which stimulates thinking about convincing argument tends to augment opinion change. Spontaneous additions and elaborations contained in the original communication which are a feature of improvisation tend to induce a greater amount of opinion change.

The effects of role playing were visible in two groups of men - the lay lectors and commentators, and the men's choir. Kelman's study shows the importance of improvisation as a factor in opinion change through role playing. This factor was not present in the roles the men accepted in the Church. The effect of the role of lay lector and commentator upon the men is extensively treated in the chapter on lay commentating. A large group of men, as many as 65 at one time, who functioned as a choir introduced community song and prayer to the congregation. This was an effective way to spark congregational singing and the men were deeply influenced by their leadership role. Congregational prayer and song became very meaningful for them. They spoke very enthusiastically about the parish program. They became salesmen with conviction.

The following comments reflect the spirit of the group:

"You just can't get up in front of a group of people in Church and tell them to sing the song. If the Church is full - 700-800 people, some will sing, the rest will hem and haw around and not even try... After the congregation heard the men sing, they chimed in with them... We warmed them up and they felt like singing... There's a guy that drives a truck all day - he's up there singing. People think 'It must be good. He's no better than I am. If he can do it, so can I.'"

It's been proven over and over that people have got to be led. I noticed in Church on Sundays, if I sing and everybody else is quiet around me, pretty soon others around me start to sing... They are going to break out of their self-consciousness. I've heard them."

"You have a bunch -- 50 - 60 -- one guy is a truck driver... another guy maybe kills hogs. People just see a bunch of men and of course they say if they can sing, I can too."

These studies on role playing, together with our own study, show the value of extending different active roles to the laity. We can ask - what new roles can we devise in the liturgy to bring into play the effectiveness of role playing on influencing behavior?

Role playing leads to changes in personal convictions. Does overt verbalization facilitate the acceptance of beliefs or opinions advocated by the communication?

Experimental evidence indicates that one of the effects of overt verbalization is to increase the rate of learning verbal material. A study on audience participation, reported by Hovland, Lumsdaine and Sheffield (1949), showed that elicitation of overt verbal responses resulted in a marked gain in learning efficiency: the Army's phonetic alphabet, presented in a film strip, was learned more rapidly by an audience which was required to rehearse the names aloud than by an equivalent audience which merely saw and heard the communication. Studies of this kind indicate that audience participation augments the effectiveness of purely instructional communications.

A study by Kurtz and Hovland (1953), has shown that overt verbalization at the time of observation of stimulus objects will significantly improve the subsequent recall of the objects. Both on recognition and on recall tests there was a clear superiority for the

verbalization condition. Thus, any active participation device which augments retention of the content of a communication may ultimately influence acceptance. It increases the chances that the content will be subsequently thought about or expressed under conditions where reinforcements can occur.

Our study shows some of the effects of overt verbalization. In particular, the people's comments on their deeper understanding and appreciation of the Mass substantiate the value of overt verbalization.

We now have summarized some psychological studies that induce behavioral change; changing the environment or social setting, group discussion, role playing, overt verbalization.

In this study of active participation at Mass we discover a number of factors operating that are conducive to behavioral change. The worship situation was changed. The layman's participation at Mass is active, verbalized through community prayer and song. Some of the men are undergoing a role change as lectors and commentators. The entire congregation is shifted from a spectator to a participant role. Of necessity, much discussion resulted in small reference groups. One would expect a change of attitudes to occur in the Catholic community as our study bears out.

CHAPTER II

POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS OF THE LAITY
TOWARD ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT Mass

In general, the interviews reveal an overall change of attitude toward the Mass with active participation -- a shift from a heavy feeling of obligation to one of relief and enjoyment of the Mass.

Active participation removes part of the drudgery from the obligation of Sunday Mass. It makes worship more enjoyable. An imposed obligation rarely generates an enthusiastic spirit. It rarely gives birth to a burning ardor for a cause. Strong positive feelings toward the Mass emerge as a result of active participation.

Here is the way people describe their appreciation of active participation at Mass - teenagers, the aged, single, married, men, women, a cross-section of all - teachers, social workers, the butcher, the steel worker, delinquents, college graduates, a few who never even graduated from grammar school:

"From the time I could understand, I was told by the good nuns that if I didn't go to church, when I died the devils would eat me up and everything like that. It more or less grew up in me that one had to go to church. I know what it is like to feel 'Oh, I've got to go to church tomorrow.'"

"We weren't even thinking about Mass. We didn't get anything out of it. We were there because the Third Commandment said we had to be."

"I went on Sundays because I had to go. I would never have stayed away because I knew this was the law of God, but somehow it didn't seem sensible to me."

"You go to church sometimes and you sit there like a dummy. You go just because it is a must."

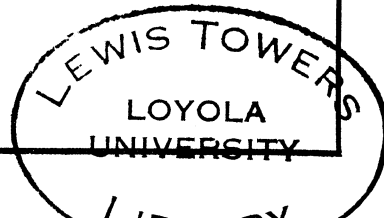
"Now there is no effort. Before, you used to have to tell yourself it was Sunday and you have to go to Mass. Now you more or less look forward to going because it is not a dull hour."

"Since I started coming to Mass here I go because I want to and get much more out of it."

Notice that people went to Church driven more by external pressures and a sense of obligation, and not from an inner conviction of the reasonableness of the worship of God. The dominant, almost exclusive, motivating force appears to be a variety of pressures: "I forced myself" or "my husband forced me," "my wife forced me", "I forced my children", and "Church pressured me through the fear of hell."

The motivating sense of obligation is expressed in a variety of ways. "We had to go," "duty," "you had to tell yourself it was Sunday and you have to go to Mass," "the Third Commandment said," "right thing to do," "must," "fulfill obligation," "sing," "pushed to go." Attending Mass in this way resulted in a "dull hour," "sit there like a dummy," "we weren't even thinking about the Mass," "little prayer," "didn't get anything out of it," "didn't seem sensible to me," "didn't understand it." It was attendance without reason--blind obedience. Such attendance surely dulls the inner spirit. The conception of Mass as an obligation creates an adverse reaction and an emotional field of repulsion.

A biographical note on the caliber of Catholics who made such statements lends even greater weight to the values of active participation. These frank revelations of



their inner feelings and thoughts were made by the "finest" of Catholics: by parents with large families who send all their children to Catholic schools -- grammar, high school, many even to Catholic colleges. They are faithful to the sacraments, wouldn't think of missing Mass, cooperate in all parish undertakings and conscientiously support the parish. The street on which they live has been dubbed "Catholic Avenue". So I was enormously surprised to hear some of their statements and deeply grateful to be trusted with their inner feelings. Parallel statements have been made by a cross-section of all parishioners.

People have a different attitude toward Mass with active participation. A change of attitude toward it has occurred. People describe their reactions with expressions such as "I've never had anything impress me so much." "I really enjoy going to Church" -- "no effort" -- "want to go" -- "get much more out of it" -- "nothing like it" -- "I look forward to it" -- "feel better inside" -- "enjoy doing it" -- "I feel relaxed" -- "It's alive" -- "lifts you up" -- "gets into you" -- "never enjoyed the Mass before" -- "appreciate the Mass to a far greater extent than ever before" -- "participation is great" -- "privilege" -- "Makes one feel important" -- "actually feels so big, just wonderful" -- "felt quite welcome" -- "feel more at home".

Occasionally people who were not parishioners were part of the group interviewed and they gave their impression of the few times they had been in the parish church for the "new" Mass.

"I was very impressed, and upon leaving the Church, I felt so good -- just as though I'd been to Mass for the first time."

"I've only attended Mass in your church once, and it gave me a warm feeling. I just hope that our church would follow the same."

A former parishioner returning to the parish after an absence of many years expressed exuberantly:

"I felt like standing up and shouting Bravo! It's about time you made these people pay attention to what's going on. It's about time somebody taught us what's happening. I couldn't wait until the Mass was over to rush out to tell my husband. Isn't it wonderful? I wish everybody would be able to experience it, I do. It was just like someone gave us a million dollars. I wish I could tell everybody and not say I feel so sorry for them having to go to the old type of Mass. I wish everyone could have participation like we do, and I just rave about it."

We must be careful not to brand such feelings as superficial, or evaluate them lightly or dismiss them as unlettered sentimentality. These have deep roots and express positive feelings. When adults express such things as: "I pay more attention at Mass now" -- "I'm at Mass now, I don't know where I was before" -- "My mind kept right with the Mass and right with the priest" -- "We can express ourselves and understand the meaning of the Mass' Participation in the recited Mass gives me a feeling of belonging" -- "It is a good feeling to do everything together," then we are foolish indeed not to take careful notice.

People spontaneously want to tell others about participation and express the desire to spread it to other parishes: "I wish every parish had it" -- "I wish it would spread further to other parishes" -- "I hope the day will come when all churches have it."

One man summarized his inner feelings: "How do you feel when you are upon the altar, Father? Well, we feel the same as you do -- proud."

Let us take a deeper look at the insights of our parish on non-participation. As the interviews continued, I found many quotations were not unique and singular, but began to repeat themselves frequently.

We can begin with an overall impression of the Mass without participation -- "The emptiness" -- "the nothingness".

"When I go to other churches now, it seems like I'm not even at Mass. I hardly realize what is going on. I just sit there very unhappily."

"I don't think the Mass is the same if you don't participate."

"Yesterday we went to St. -----Church¹ and it didn't seem like we had been to Mass."

Note the rejection of the Mass without active participation.

"We went back to -----Church, but it was all for the birds. I was glad when it was over. I wouldn't go back there after having participation here."

"My son says it embarrasses him not to participate. He doesn't like it quiet. He doesn't know what is going on."

Other people tagged an un-participated Mass with "dead" -- "nothing there" -- "dull" -- "boring" -- "feel lost."

"I had something happen to me today. I went to a First Mass -- a Solemn High Mass. I felt out of place. I just sat there. I got nothing out of it. I was bored."

"We don't go to -----Church any more because there is nothing there. I was just there. We knew why we were there, but we felt like we weren't doing anything just being there."

¹In almost every case, a different church is mentioned each time.

"There was no participation. I was lost."

"The way I feel about this is the way I feel when I go into a church where I don't understand the language they're using -- like at -----Church. When I go there I feel lost because I do not understand Polish."

"Any time I walk into the church of my new parish, I have a sense of loss. I know very well when I walk in there there isn't going to be a participation Mass. I know I'm going to Mass and I know I'm a part of it, but somehow I don't feel right. You don't miss it until you don't have it any more. Then you realize what you've lost."

"It really would be dead without participation."

"At -----Church they don't have anything. It's quiet. It's so dead in there I feel ashamed."

"Every time I went to Mass before, I yawned from boredom."

"I've been bored. I've been daydreaming when I have gone to different churches where there wasn't a participation Mass. I just sat there."

"I don't want to go back to my own church now because all I'm doing is going back to the slow hour again. I used to fall asleep. About halfway through I started yawning and continued yawning until Mass was over. Now I stay awake when I go to St. Rose."

He begs the question who says that people should be appreciating the Mass regardless of whether it is participated or not. The point of the fact is that experientially people do not seem to benefit. They experience these feelings of "being lost" -- "coldness towards the Mass" -- "it's dead" -- "nothingness" -- "emptiness" -- "cut off from the altar" -- "distracted" -- "daydreaming" -- "falling asleep" -- "yawning".

People became very conscious of this passivity at an un-participated Mass. They described it in a variety of ways:

"In the summer we go to Fox Lake. We go to church there and the priest is real nice. When we attend Mass there, I honestly feel like I'm watching television because they do not have participation. I'm just watching and watching and watching. Actually you feel as if you didn't go to church at all. When you don't have participation, you just sit there -- nothing. With participation, I guess most people enjoy it more. You want to come back."

Strange that a parish should look upon the central mystery of their Faith as something so spiritless, so empty, so boring, so full of distraction. And yet it is a fact.

At an un-participated Mass, people experienced coldness and felt like strangers.

"I've been to a church that had participation, but only certain responses were expected of the congregation. But even that was a little better than the "professional Mass" where the choir and the priest participate, but that's all. You feel like an outsider. I couldn't take part in it. I didn't feel like I was there and that I was interested in it."

"I went to a beautiful church once and they had a choir in the balcony. Everybody was looking around to see where the music was coming from. For every part of the Mass they had a different soloist. It was a huge church, but you felt left out. We were all the way in the back and you just couldn't feel a part of anything."

"Without participation you become a critic of everything they do. If they have a choir, in your estimation they don't know how to sing. When they do sing, they don't sing the way they are supposed to be singing and so forth."

By way of observation, a person doesn't usually become a critic if he takes part in the performance. He should tend, all things being equal, to gloss over his own failings --

but when someone else is performing, he has a tendency to become a critic, observe and pass judgment.

Now we can't blame anybody for rejecting the Mass if this is the way they experience it, if the overall effect is that they haven't even gone to church -- felt empty about it -- thought it was dead -- felt confused -- lost -- didn't know where they were -- cut off from the altar -- cut off from everybody else -- felt distracted -- found it hard to concentrate -- daydreamed -- yawned -- slept -- bored. People felt like strangers in the very place where they should have felt at home.

Isolation is a phenomenon of present-day city life. People live close to one another, and at the same time do not know their neighbors, next door, in the apartment above, in the apartment alongside. Sometimes a man withdraws from society, a withdrawal from life that frequently leads to a mental institution. Thus the implicit tragedy of worship that tends to spawn aloneness and isolation.

This feeling of aloneness was threaded all through the comments describing non-participated Mass. The awareness of these feelings contrasted sharply with the positive feelings of togetherness expressed after active participation.

"I went to St. -----Church before I went to St. Rose, and it seemed like everyone was by himself, in his own secluded corner. They were not doing anything together."

"When you go to a church that doesn't have the recited Mass, you're alone, you're really by yourself. I sort of get the feeling there is me and God, and that I'm praying alone and so is everybody there."

"In a quiet Mass it seems like just one person, the priest, is offering the Mass, whereas in the recited Mass there is a greater unity. The prayers of the people are all flowing together instead of all going off in separate directions."

"In other places, the Mass belongs to the priest. That is his job. He says the Mass and that's it. We listen. But here it belongs to everybody. People gather together to worship together. It's the greatest feeling."

Shall we quietly resign ourselves to the fact that people must suffer such isolation--in a crowd--in the Church, where everyone is supposed to experience the unity and familiarity of a family, where we are to experience the Mystical Body at home in our Father's house? Our parish expressed the same thought in so many different ways. "By yourself." "Alone in a crowd." "Work as a single unit." "Secluded corner." "Own little mood." "All wrapped up." "So detached." We walked in alone, walked out alone, and so we lived alone, worked alone, and for all practical purposes, we were alone.

How gratifying it was to hear people say, "My neighbor is no longer a stranger." As we listened to the people, we found that those who experienced active participation at Mass grew in awareness that the Mass is community worship -- the public worship of the Mystical Body of Christ. As one person put it:

"You can't appreciate the idea of community when you read a book about it -- when you read about the unified feeling of the people and the priest as their representative. You couldn't get that feeling, that sense of being in the Mystical Body."

Through active participation, many people experienced a closeness to the priest-president and their fellow parishioners. So many expressed how the bonds of union with one

another and with the celebrant became an existential reality, a conscious experience.

"When you're participating together it seems like all the people belong together, that you are all part of a family. We're all together, singing together, offering the Mass together with the priest. He's not the whole show. We're all in it together."

"When I go to another Church where it is not a Recited Mass, I feel like we are a thousand parts, all separate. When you walk into St. Rose's you walk into this unity."

"When you have participation it is all the people honoring God the same way. It makes you feel more a part of the whole Church in terms of people. There is more of a connection between the priest, myself and the people around me. You realize the Church is not just a building but rather is composed of people."

"The Catholic Church consisted of nuns and priests. Now since the recited Mass, we all say the "Amens" together, all the responses. People are one with the Church. Before if the church was crowded, there would be 500 individuals there."

"I couldn't feel any unity in the Church. I was told that the priest is offering Mass for me, but I couldn't see any connection how he was doing it for me. Now every time the priest turns around and says "Dominus vobiscum" and 500 people shout out "Et cum spiritu tuo," I can see it. He's talking directly to you. Before he was just talking to those few altar boys around him and the people were just shoved aside. I feel like the priest is saying "Come closer." I feel a real closeness. I experience the unity."

"I like participating with the congregation as well as actually feeling that at the same time I am participating with the priest. I don't feel like I'm up there at the altar performing, but I feel that he is part of me and I am part of him. All of us in a sense are in the same position as the priest is at the altar. Participation in the recited Mass is the best thing that ever happened. You are enjoying the Mass more because you are participating with the priest saying the Mass."

We observe the contrast -- the un-participated Mass leading to feelings of aloneness, separateness, isolation; the participated Mass generating feelings of togetherness, an awareness of unity, a community.

Our people expressed many such positive feelings after exposure to active participation, in bold relief to the negative attitudes which complained "alone," "dead," "lost," "missing," "spectator," "watching," "dummy," "boring," and so forth and so on of the "dead" Mass. Of the many reactions, I was struck by the number who brought in the element of time in describing the differences between the participated Mass and the un-participated. Let it be said now:

For the Mass without participation, "went slow," "longer than an hour, it seemed," "Kept wondering if it was ever going to be over," "went on forever and ever," "seems so long," "tends to drag," "get tired," "just waiting to get it over with," and a host of equivalents gave voice to deeply rooted negative feelings which made me wonder why most of them ever bothered to go to Mass at all. The time element (and we have more to say about that for the consolation of all those priests who have heard these complaints so many times themselves) was one of the easiest points of comparison.

For instance, these are typical of the remarks on participation which usually accompanied the above:

"Naturally, if you don't understand something it's very boring to you, and it goes on forever. When you actively participate, you understand more. The time goes faster and it is more enjoyable."

"It seems that you no sooner walk into the church and you're on your way out. The time is the same, but the interest in the Mass makes the time go by a lot faster. It doesn't drag out."

"I used to wonder when and if the Mass was ever going to be over. Before the recited Mass when I did go to Church, it was a matter of just waiting until it was time to get out."

"With participation it doesn't seem like it did before when the half hour or forty-five minutes used to just drag."

"It seems like Mass is only twenty minutes or so and here it is an hour sometimes."

Priests have been made extremely self-conscious in regard to how much time Mass takes. Many are frankly afraid to say Mass slowly lest the inevitable flood of complaints begin. How many a newly ordained priest has learned his lesson within the first few days of his ministry! How many assistants have been rushed by the pastor who is sincerely trying to spare his parishioners whatever it is that causes the adverse reactions he knows will be coming?

Yet, adverse reaction is not based on the amount of time it actually takes to offer Mass, but from the type of Mass itself. Said as rapidly as possible, an un-participated Mass draws the same comments -- "drag," "boredom," "relief to get out of there." Conversely, a priest dare not gallop through a Mass if the parish is working with him. He is literally forced to take his time, to say everything more devoutly -- and God's people love it.

In making that statement, we are, of course, presupposing the careful mechanical preparation that went into our parish liturgical revival. The best of intentions and most

articulate of arguments will be dissipated by a badly handled set of mechanics -- poorly delivered readings, commentaries and sermons; an awkward organist; hymns geared more for the feminine taste than the masculine. However, the change in attitudes was not due to a better presentation of the "mechanics" of the Mass. The only variable introduced was the fact of active participation at Mass.

The interviews reveal a significant change in people's understanding of the Mass. There seems to be no question now that they enjoyed and appreciated the participated liturgy precisely because they understood it. Even those who resisted active participation the most vigorously echoed this thought: "I understand the Mass more now."

When the personal knowledge of it is inadequate, inaccurate and confused, it is not surprising that the Mass also becomes unattractive. Like a picture on a slide projector, out of focus, not only is its beauty impossible to appreciate, it is disturbing to the onlooker. Either we adjust the projector, or we move on to something else. Laymen, however, were not free to correct their blurred picture of the Mass, and many of them reacted adversely to it. Some others moved away from it, and for many of those who stayed on, what kept them there was a sense of obligation (which is admirable and even a little touching), or the threat of hell-fire (which is pathetic.)

The more it is possible for a person to experience the Mass as it unfolds, the more its different parts are linked together, the more he sees it as "good, true and beautiful," and the more he comes to love it. The stress on experience is quite deliberate. One can read several superb explanations of the Mass, attend a lecture series by a leading authority and

still, when one comes to Mass, be unable to integrate this cerebral material into a living experience. When the Mass presents a clear picture, it can be seen as the truth which it is, and it is no longer disturbing. A clear picture initiates a positive reaction -- positive emotional reaction is a better term because it springs from a better understanding of the Faith. The interviews do not specify what the people's understanding of the Mass was before participation nor what it was after participation. But that a significant change occurred in people's understanding of the Mass is revealed in the interviews. It's a personal awareness, an experience of a deeper understanding that is very meaningful for them.

Participation brings people into a new world, or so they told me. They find a wonderful exuberance and vitality and enthusiasm in this new world. So their descriptions came in terms of what they now "knew," or saw, felt and heard. "Understanding is the main thing, that's what it is." "Gives the Mass a deeper meaning." "I understand the Mass so much better." "Get more out of it." "Learn more about the Mass just through doing it." "Changing everybody's idea of what the Mass actually is."

Here are several quotes which will bring these thoughts into clearer focus.

"I went to Mass because I had to go and that was it, but I didn't understand anything at all about it until they started this recited Mass with the explanations. I didn't know what was taking place at the altar before at all. I had no idea what the priest was doing."

"This is a painless learn-as-you-go-along thing. It isn't as demanding as spending two evenings a week on an instruction-type of thing. You learn as you go. It's going to Mass and getting an education...as well as becoming more a part of what you are trying to do in church."

"It is a wonderful idea because this way you know just exactly how to stay with the priest. It gives you more of an idea of what the Mass is all about and I just love it, really and truly."

A number of people expressed the idea that what they had learned from participation helped them to attend non-participation Masses more prayerfully and with greater understanding.

"You can go to almost any church now and follow the priest. You will understand the Mass because of your own experience."

Some like to imagine that Catholic school training suffices to give a person a sufficient knowledge of the Mass -- but this isn't so. People with a thorough Catholic training expressed the following:

"The good part of it is that now you understand the Mass. We went to Catholic schools and didn't understand the Mass. If the priest at the altar crossed himself, so did we, just like little monkeys. We didn't understand why. Now when we cross ourselves, we know why we do it."

Priests in neighborhoods where a good number send their children to public schools, for whatever reason, will find the participation taking on added importance in the light of our failures in catechetical instruction:

"I went to a public school and didn't know one end of the Mass from the other."

"I am sure I missed some of the things that the children get in Catholic schools. I think this is rather a strong point because not everyone can attend a Catholic school. No matter if all the Catholics wanted to send their children to Catholic schools, there is not enough room to do this. Therefore this kind of Mass they have at St. Rose's will help those of us who did not get this early training. I am more appreciative and aware of getting more out of the Mass at St. Rose."

I feel more comfortable attending Mass here than I do elsewhere, in the sense that I have an opportunity to feel where I am going, what's coming, what's happening."

A convert's insight on the personal values of active participation is significant:

"I have the convert's point of view. I like it because I can understand the Mass. I know what's going on now."

We might wonder too, what there is in a participated liturgy that helps bring people back into the Church, that draws back the fallen-away...

"It gave the Mass a deep meaning. Now I understand my religion much more clearly. This never would have been possible without the recited Mass."

"I was away from the Church for many years. Eight years ago you people started telling me what the Mass was all about. That's when I really got honestly excited. For the first time in my life I wanted to learn what the Mass really is."

People came to love participation because it added to their understanding of the Mass, a weighty reason in itself for their wanting more of it, and a reinforcement of the principle given by the Council document when it speaks of the liturgy as a "teacher". We want to make the worship of Christians total and, of course, rational. If people are aware of what is going on, we are assured that the rational machinery of man is in operation. It is interesting to note (once more) that when the topic of active participation was brought up, the first evaluation was usually in terms of understanding the Mass. It became something of a refrain, in fact.

I sense here the fragmentary expression of a nameless depth of meaning. I am always aware of it as I hear our people express themselves in the living context of the liturgy. I

have heard priests who fear that participation can never be more than another external operation. But our parish was not referring to mere externals when it said, over and over again,

"This has brought me understanding of the Mass. And this is why I appreciate it, and enjoy it."

The interviews reveal that people's attentiveness at Mass undergoes a noticeable change. The effect of active participation on distractions came up almost as frequently as the question of better understanding of the Mass -- even more frequently in some respects. People said they understood the Mass more and were able to follow it more closely, more prayerfully, with fewer distractions. "No time to catnap." "Daydream." "Gawk around." "Get carried away." "You're really in there, you're concentrating."

Frankly, this was a stunning revelation when it finally dawned on me. I had never questioned what I thought would be the added distractions - that would be and must be tolerated for other values gained - which participation would impose on our people.

It came as a surprise, then, to be told that people preferred participation because they were less distracted. "Keeps your mind on the altar, right on the Mass." "Keeps you on your toes." "Alert." "You know that you are really paying attention." "Nothing else is on your mind." "Would doze off - but not now." "No trouble staying awake." The contrast drawn between participated and non-participated Mass was sharp and clear: "Used to float away into space thinking of everything else." "My mind wanders." "I'm not really paying attention to the Mass." "I used to watch everybody come in."

People in a large group are easily distracted by quiet. Silence seems to foster day-reaming, they told me. They find it difficult, if not impossible, to meditate. Their unanimous experience, from our interviews, was this: Active participation does not distract me from prayer, but helps me to concentrate.

Against the background and training of their lives as laymen, most people are not able to meditate at first. It is surprising, and intriguing, to watch them learn to meditate from their experience of formally and meaningfully praying (for the first time one suspects).

Listen to some of their comments:

"I like participation because I really am getting the meaning of the words. Otherwise I would be gawking around saying a few Hail Mary's. I would even forget the Mass was going on."

"I would say the Rosary and I would look at a cute hat and notice who had a new dress and wonder when it was going to be over. And then I was out. Now it's different. It's altogether different."

And this light-hearted and wonderfully honest description of her past ways:

"Well, I mean for me the Mass was a hectic blur. I would get in Church, you know, and I'd look at the candles. I didn't even know what kind of Mass it was. I'd sit on the bench, and I'd look at the candles. Then I'd think, Gee, that's a cute little altar boy. Now what's Father doing? I'd say a prayer and my knees would hurt. I'd just get comfortable on the bench and then, Oh, for heaven's sake, do I have to stand up again? I've got to get out of this place. Now what is he talking about? Good Lord, I don't know what he's saying. When is the next holyday? Are they going up for Communion? I mean, this was what was going through my mind all the time. I'd look at the confessional. I'd follow every painting. I'd get comfortable on the bench. My husband

used to poke me in the ribs -- Will you PLEASE sit still! Well, you know, then I'd get mad...Honestly, I used to get out of church a nervous wreck from all that movement and fighting and all, in church!"

It is revealing here to examine a little deeper how a quiet atmosphere gave birth to distractions. I could not help but compare the picture these people painted of quiet with the much different one I had.

"When it was quiet in the Church I would daydream, but with everybody participating, I'm trying to participate with the rest. You don't intentionally get carried away from the Mass, you just do...Something comes to your mind and if you're in a quiet part of the Mass, you'll be daydreaming. It's hard to pray that way for an hour, all by yourself."

"Before many times, years ago, I found myself just sitting idly thinking about other things and I would get a million miles away from the Mass. But participation keeps demanding my attention. It helps me to think of what I actually should be thinking about."

The ushers are in an excellent position to observe the congregation's attentiveness, before and after participation.

"I have been attending Mass for over forty years, twenty-nine of them as an usher. This puts me in a good position to observe the people at Mass. There were some people, I might say a few, who would be reading their missals or saying the Rosary. There were far more looking at the ceiling or watching out the window at what the neighbors were doing and what they were wearing. It was every person for himself, in an attitude of 'We can't wait until it gets over.' Not any more -- everyone is praying and singing together, cooperating 100% with the priest, saying the Mass and no one leaves until the last song has been sung. It's a beautiful togetherness."

"I notice that there isn't as much bobbing and weaving around as people are coming into the church. Before when somebody came to church late with high heels that 'click, click, click,' the first thing you know heads would be snapping around to see who was coming. I don't see this very much any more. People are more interested in what they are doing."

"Before, the people went to church for forty-five minutes because they had to be there. Now I notice that if you look at their faces, they're more interested and don't have the dull expression they used to have. They'd come to church half asleep and go out still half asleep. People are more awake in church now than they were before. They have an expression on their face that they know what's going on and they look at the altar more. Before they had their eyes in their books and some were actually dozing off. With active participation in the Mass the children are more occupied and less restless than at another church where they just have to sit there."

To conclude this discussion, we should take into consideration the basic human drive towards a reasonable independent achievement: the sense of satisfaction which always accompanies the job well done. This is good, and reasonable, and needs no defense in any other sphere. It was such a part of our parish's self-evaluation of our reformed liturgy that we cannot omit it here.

Active participation does bring about a notable measure of this sense of accomplishment in the person's attitude towards the Mass. People felt that they had contributed something, that they had accomplished something. When an adult has undergone a meaningless experience, he does not have such a reaction. Our people grasped something solid, although to say this is not really enough. At any rate, they were "part of the Mass," and had "really gone through something," or "got so much more out of it", and "were really praying."

Part of this sense of achievement was the awareness that they were responsible for the action of the Mass. Ontologically, of course, we realize that the intimate union between Christ the High Priest and the faithful is complete -- but does the layman in the world of experience really feel such closeness? Does he sense that he is a part of the Mass without active participation, or does this become a relatively meaningless matter of ontology, too? No question that active participation in our parish brought the person "in", and made him a part "of" the Mass:

"My home parish doesn't have active participation. To me, it just doesn't seem like going to church there. I feel more like I have gone to church when I come here. We really worship. You've done more when you come here."

"Sometimes I feel that the priest is doing his part and I am doing mine. Our parts together -- that's fine. To me, I go to church now and if there is no recited Mass or sung Mass, the Mass is nothing. I have often wondered -- all these years, did I ever fulfill my obligation? Just because I went there? Why did I go? I didn't give anything. I didn't receive anything. How could I fulfill my obligation? By taking up space? Is it a rule of the Church to go to church to occupy space?"

"I don't see it that way. Now I know I participate. I feel better. I go to church now and if I don't have active participation I get bored -- even if I went all the way through all the motions and received Holy Communion, I wouldn't be able to say I really went to church. I was there. I went to Holy Communion, but was I in church?"

"Another church was closer to my home, but I didn't care for it. You just went and came back. You didn't give yourself, or something. I don't know. You just ... attended."

"I feel that when I go to Mass I am giving something of myself -- that I've been part of the Mass, not sitting there like a dummy while somebody else is doing my work. I feel I'm being heard, that I'm not being left out."

One wonders what they felt before, whether perhaps they were like the player sitting on the bench. He never got into the game. "I'm part of the team, but I never get to play." A person needs to get into the game.

The negative feelings our people expressed, as being spectators, were in marked contrast to their positive pleasure at suddenly becoming part of something. The really great accomplishments of the Mass lie in the realm of divine grace. And yet we are setting up a monstrous dichotomy when man at worship is treated as though he worshiped only with a mind and not with his entire being. It is good when a man experiences ritually the accomplishment, and satisfaction, and honest joy, which are all part of the Christian mystery of the Mass.

A sensitivity to a man's need to have a sense of accomplishment is part of all our responsibility here. It makes the practical matters of liturgical reform much easier to plot out. Its reward is its own sense of satisfaction that we can involve the whole man, the total man, the psychosomatic unity, in the Christian experience of worshipping God. After all, that's how God made us all; and grace still has a habit of building on human nature. That fact, indeed, is one of the greatest mysteries of the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER III
 NEGATIVE ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS OF THE LAITY
 TOWARD ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AT MASS

A compliment gladdens the heart, and priests are no exception. Opposition causes everyone concern. Statements such as the following would bring any priest to the point of making him an ardent promoter and supporter of active participation.

"Before if I missed Mass on a Sunday, so what? It was nothing. But since they started the recited Mass as we have it here, I feel I am a part of the Mass. I don't miss Mass. I wouldn't think of it. It wouldn't be Sunday without Mass. It's something I look forward to every week. Instead of it being a duty, it has become a privilege."

"I wasn't from this parish. It was quite by accident that I came one Sunday. It was all so new to me, belonging to a different parish as I did. We didn't have the recited Mass at all. It was so welcome -- so good to be able to express yourself with everyone. I continued to come. I just couldn't have it any other way now."

And the most staunch supporter of active participation will be shaken a bit by a remark such as:

"I don't enjoy going to Church because we have to participate. I don't like to go to St. Rose's any more."

"I am bothered and don't like it. In fact, I stopped coming here."

The interviews reveal a negative reaction to active participation at Mass on the part of some. Each parishioner reacts uniquely to participation. There are no two alike. Among some there is an apparent similarity in reaction, but even in this there is a difference. The

reaction of some is unusually strange -- hard to believe.

Many express a deep disturbance and irritation at the interference of active participation with their personal prayer and their personal purpose in going to Church.

"After I heard it the first time, I came outside and I said: Uh-uh, this won't do! I just came here to tell my troubles. I figured I would say my prayers and then watch the priest, but oh, all this going on. Can't get used to it."

"I go equipped. I have my Rosary and my prayerbook; but I always have that feeling 'Here comes the confusion.' Somehow I don't get the things done that I came for. The quiet Mass was nice. I could concentrate on the things that happened to me during the week that I liked and didn't like and I could still get the Rosary in."

"The recited Mass interrupts your thoughts, your concentration on the Mass and your prayers. Many times I walk in with the intention of praying. I start to pray and I offer my Mass for the deceased, and so on. Out of the clear sky I am interrupted. I forget about everything."

"They talk and sing and I forget what I want to say. I want to concentrate on something and I can't because I hear all those other noises -- the singing and everything."

"I was disturbed when I felt I should have been praying. I was worried about it."

When people view participation as an obstacle to their prayer, a variety of hostile emotions are aroused and expressed. Participation takes on the form of an attack. People become defensive and hostile and either withdraw into a shell of personal prayer or openly "attack" the priest.

"I decided to keep on doing what I was doing. To tell the truth, I try not to pay any attention to you."

"I distinctly tried to bury my head in the Missal."

"When you first started all this rigamarole about singing out loud and about participation, I thought you were nuts."

Others elaborated on their resistance to change:

"You can't break away from the old ways just like that. It's hard to break away from it. When you participate in the regular Mass like I have for about thirty years and a change comes in like that, you begin to wonder 'What is this?' This is just like taking a bunch of people, setting them down in the benches and telling them to all at once say their Confession publicly."

Some question the reason for change.

"We have been doing it this same way for all these years, and now we have to change? How come?"

That plea will be fairly typical. Statements like these cause one to wonder whether resistance to change was due to a change itself, or rather because the changes were made without sufficient explanation. A child will follow a simple order, but an adult looks for the effect and demands an explanation. A change without explanation is a form of attack, causing people to become defensive and hostile. This points to the need of a more rational, prudential approach to introducing participation, as well as other things. The presentations of reasons for change are of utmost importance. It has been proven sufficiently that resistance to change lessens when reasons are given for such a change. Emotional reaction changes when reason places before us a different picture. A person views "change without reason" one way and "change with the following reasons" another way. Thus, a great deal of hostility toward participation frequently is due to a faulty presentation. When people understand for themselves, opposition lessens.

Active participation poses a definite threat to many people. The presence of a threat arouses the emotion of fear. The emotion of fear, coupled with self-consciousness, has been expressed as a dominant obstacle to participation. People also felt threatened by the presence of one another, even though these be their own family members. They become very self-conscious of people sitting next to them. As chief obstacles to participation, fear and self-consciousness seem to follow closely behind people's difficulty with the Latin.

"That's why I don't like to go to church with my wife. She sits next to me and when I start singing, she starts and makes me stop all of a sudden. She looks at me and kind of snickers. I can tell she is laughing at me."

"I felt self-conscious when I first walked in and saw those papers in the pew and everybody picked them up and sang. I just didn't feel like I was at home. It was altogether new and I just didn't feel like letting out. I thought it was probably silly or something."

"The whole thing is fear. It's fear."

"I didn't want to sing. I just wanted to forget it. A lot of people can't sing very well and they are conscious of it. I thought 'These people, they might hear me sing. I'm not going to sing,' and so I just sit there and watch. I'm afraid to say anything because I know the person in front of me. If he hears me singing, he might think I'm an idiot, so I sit quiet so he won't hear me."

"I'd never sing in church. My voice carries and I'd be the only guy up there with a deep voice and everybody'd turn around and look at me. You're self-conscious, you know, and most of the people in the church are -- they're self-conscious too. Everybody is scared of making a mistake. Everybody'll look at them."

"When I sit alongside my daughter, I feel so embarrassed. She can answer every prayer. I can't catch up at all. I try to -- so hard -- and can't. I'm so afraid somebody else will hear me say wrong words."

"At first it seemed you were careful who you were next to. You didn't want to answer because you might not know how to pronounce the words or sing them, so you kept still. As it went on, you got used to it."

"I won't go to church with my kids because they laugh at me. One time I had the boys with me and I started to sing. They thought it was the biggest joke and I told them I would never go to Mass with them again."

"I feel very much ill at ease. It seems like everybody is looking at me and throwing daggers."

Very many men were in the grips of self-consciousness and fear -- ever present factors that keep so many men from fuller participation.

Others expressed related feelings such as embarrassment, strangeness and confusion.

"It was very strange. It was unusual. I was embarrassed. I didn't know exactly what to do, not being aware of when to stand or when to respond to the different parts. I had this feeling of just being lost."

"I thought I was in the wrong church. It seemed strange to me. I didn't know if I was even in a Catholic church. When I came out, I looked to see what church I was in."

I could hardly believe the reactions of some, so strange were they to me. Often people re-stated, with great seriousness, their obstacles and were surprised that I didn't readily accept them. These obstacles were most real to them. Other emotional reactions that were equally deep-rooted were expressed, too, but these were not so common.

"I felt kind of strange because I thought it was supposed to be a place of all silence where everybody stood and watched."

At times, habits acquired in childhood become a stumbling block in adulthood.

Emphasis on training to be silent in church proved a major stumbling block for many.

"It hit me awfully hard, talking out. I didn't think it was right. We were trained not to talk in church. I thought it was terrible."

"When they first started the recited Mass, I'll bet half the parish felt the same as I: 'What are they, a bunch of nuts, talking in church like that?'"

"I never felt right at first, talking out loud when we were supposed to be quiet. I never liked that. I felt like I was in a movie lobby. I couldn't understand this talking out loud in church when we were taught to be quiet. I thought it was wrong."

To some, participation brought back association with past unpleasant memories -- stereotyped reactions, as for example:

"I go to church to pray. If I had to go to church with the thought 'It's like going to school, that I have to answer questions in Latin,' I cannot feel I am in church."

"When I was single and shortly after I first got married, I went to church with my mother. We did quite a lot of singing. This kind of brings back the memory of my mother's death and I just don't care for it any more. I used to enjoy it with Ma."

People rarely express such stereotyped, conditioned reactions, but they are more common than we would suspect or care to believe.

Others felt they were taking on a responsibility that didn't belong to them.

"I felt as though we were interfering with the altar boys because all the years I've been going to Mass, the people were always quiet and it was just the altar boys that answered the priest. I felt I shouldn't be doing this. It was something more of an honor for the altar boys. We were just supposed to be onlookers."

"All we are doing by participating is taking away from the priest."

"By having the Mass as we are having it now, we are placing ourselves, I think, on the same level with the priests."

A negligible number objected to the singing -- again perhaps from failure to recognize that song is prayer or by reason of lack of singing ability.

"I go to church to pray, not to sing. I just don't feel right when I'm in church -- you go to start saying the Rosary and then they tell you to turn the page to so and so and sing. To me, I don't go there to sing. I'm not a singer and I don't intend to ever be one."

Against the background of the following once rather common conception of a priest, some people felt unworthy to participate.

"My father always said the priest was God. I'm 48 years old and I've been brought up with the knowledge that when the priest shook his finger, I shook. He was God. Participation belongs more to the Religious Orders. I live a different life compared to the priests and nuns. I don't think I'm worthy to participate. How many people in the state of mortal sin come in church and pick up the leaflets and start reading them and saying the Mass? I don't think that's right. It loses the important atmosphere. I always felt the Mass was strictly for the priest."

Lack of knowledge of what was taking place disturbed many people who expressed their chagrin more forcefully.

"The first time they had it and they passed out the booklets, everybody stood their kind of surprised -- 'what's this?'"

"Well, I'll tell the truth, Father, I'm not going behind the bush at all. I thought: 'What's this Father John thinking about?' I couldn't understand why you were trying to change things, especially for us old people who don't understand one word about it.' What's he going to do next?' I used to say that every Sunday -- and then when Father Fearon started... goodbye! "

"I know so many people said the same thing -- at first they were very irritated because they didn't know what was going on."

One or two preferred to follow the Mass more meditatively.

"I like to stop and meditate. At different times different prayers mean more to you. You might spend more time on certain prayers than you would on others, depending on how you feel at the time, whereas in the recited Mass, you just have to keep on moving. It just seems as though I don't get anything out of it."

To others, participation seemed like an empty reading exercise without meaning.

"I'm just reading prayers...reading a lot of words and not really getting anything out of it. I'm doing it only from habit, just like anything else -- from habit, and I don't like it."

It is interesting to note that some began to get irritated with the non-participants.

"If I look around and see someone who isn't singing, it irritates me. I feel like telling them to pick up the sheets and participate."

"The only distraction I find is that everyone doesn't take up the hymn card. That is distracting to me."

Surely these excerpts do not exhaust the reactions of our people to participation, nor do they necessarily express their deepest feelings and attitudes. Human reactions are more complex than these quotations indicate, but this sampling does open a new view of parishioner's feelings, thus enabling us -- laity and clergy -- to better cope with the human difficulties in participation. (The study will be even more worthwhile if it inspires priests to find out for themselves, by questioning their parishioners on THEIR reactions.)

Finally many other parallel obstacles exist that we could not unearth in our interviews. Some of the obstacles expressed were, and are, very deeply rooted. Hearing them aroused my sympathy. It was a plea from our people for my patience and understanding:

Understand us, give us time and we will work out our difficulties and become enthusiastic participants...

How should the priest react to those who resist participation, who openly object to it, who display hostility? The ointment that soothes the wounds is the kind acceptance and sincere understanding of people who react in opposition. Simply to understand them calms their feelings. We must bear each other's burdens. The whole introduction and development of a participation program must be saturated with understanding.

One cannot unequivocally say that the chief opposition to participation comes from attachment to personal prayer or resistance to change. That they were present in our parish we cannot deny. However, the ratio was not as great as one would believe.

Attachment to personal prayer is relaxed and resistance dislodged by a realistic, experiential knowledge of the structure of the Mass. Until this experiential knowledge takes hold, many people are wholly lacking in the knowledge that participation -- singing -- is praying. Complete failure in introducing participation often times is more the result of imposition of it on the people rather than setting the foundation through the prudential process in the parishioners. No amount of knowledge, of course, will dislodge all resistance. A need to understand the reaction and not oppose it is of utmost importance.

A priest must take a look at participation through the eyes, mind and heart of the parishioner. He must understand the struggles of parishioners with participation; and for some, it is a rending struggle. He must struggle with them as they adjust to this new manner of worship. He must seek to understand their prayer habits, their feelings, their attitudes, their emotional reactions to change, their attitude toward Latin, toward singing, toward participation in general, becoming aware of the emotionally charged atmosphere -- their hostility to him, manifested subtly in one form or another. No amount of enthusiasm, no amount of persuasion, encouragement or psychological help on the part of the priest will substitute for a sincere understanding of his parishioners. A direct assault rarely, if ever, helps. Rather, let him publicly express his understanding of them and thus communicate to them that he sympathizes with their self-consciousness, their embarrassment, their disturbances. Priests must take this as a general rule: we must understand, and express our understanding, and honest sympathy, with our fellow-parishioners as they struggle to make active participation part and parcel of their Sunday worship, as

they wrestle with new regulations, as they make new and radical adjustments in their prayer life.

CHAPTER IV

PEOPLE'S REACTIONS TOWARD COMMUNITY SINGING
AT MASS, INSIGHTS OF THE LAITY ON LANGUAGE OF THE
THE MASS AND USE OF THE MISSAL AND LAY COMMENTATING

There are few people still left in actively promoting the liturgical renewal who will not stress the importance in a satisfying liturgy of song by the community. Too many beg off in the face of difficulties with sighs of resignation and a show of disappointment that "people just won't sing in Church." The interviews show that the majority of people desire, approve of, and enjoy singing at Mass on Sundays at St. Rose of Lima Church. After a time, perhaps a year or two, it is not unusual to find the congregations at even the very early morning weekday Masses breaking into song. Music is by nature festive, and it is enjoyable once people can relax with it. Here is a list of statements of approval which we can multiply into the hundreds:

"I could sing all the time. I express myself better in singing. I love to sing."

"I like to sing. If I'm not allowed to sing, I feel like I have been cheated."

"...lost without it."

"I don't respond myself until the singing part comes along. Now this, as they say in the modern age, I dig. Ninety out of a hundred people like to sing. You know what I like best? Christmas, because you sing more songs."

"In the Protestant churches they participate so much. They really sing. I always felt this was what was lacking in the Catholic churches."

Surprising, but those statements were made by men. Even those who objected in general to the whole idea of participation wanted to retain the singing of carols during the Christmas season and hymns appropriate to Easter; in fact, I found scarcely one person who objected to carols, or even a recessional hymn. Singing was so readily accepted that we found little or no opposition to it.

Discussion of singing brought enthusiastic responses. Here are some of the others:

"The more singing at Mass, the better."

"Gives vent to your feelings by singing, otherwise it is a monologue. There is so much more meaning to song itself."

"When you know a song by heart you go out singing it. You feel like it isn't quiet prayer. It's a loud prayer. A lot of times you want to bring out your prayers in voice."

"...feel happier and better when I sing."

"You express yourself better with singing. Maybe you can't say it in words, through speaking. But singing, you can say so much more. Singing is a must."

"...you are participating more."

People were much more aware of the unity, the oneness, that results from singing.

"...One group, one song, one purpose."

"Gives you a feeling of belonging."

"Everyone joining in the singing really makes you feel that you are a part of the service."

Others spoke of singing as making them less distracted:

"You're less prone to distractions if you can burst out into song periodically. It helps break down people's reserve when they sing. Singing brings you back into the Church and you feel better. You feel more at Mass."

"I'd rather have the congregation sing instead of the choir. I noticed at High Mass it seems you follow along with the choir and you get distracted because you're listening to them sing. It would be better if the whole congregation sang during the Mass."

Singing was a link with our separated brothers, and it helped the adjustment process of new Catholics:

"I learned 'Holy God' at the Moody Bible Institute when I was six years old. Doesn't that bring a unity to everything?"

That's a good question, and one which will have to be answered by others. But in that remark, and in others, music was described in terms of having a natural and easy carry-over into the daily lives of our parish. Singing brought the Church into their homes:

"Over and above the other things, my husband, daughter and I love to sing anyway. If we are doing the dishes or cleaning walls or something, we sing popular songs. But it isn't uncommon for us now to come up with the Gloria, or the Kyrie, Sanctus or Holy God or any of the things we sing in Church. It just comes out spontaneously. But we never did this before."

"A lot of things you forget. The singing seems to bring it all back to your mind. All day long the songs keep coming back to you."

There was an interesting variation expressed as to how preferable singing, as a prayer form, was to anything else. Many people preferred congregational singing to public prayer, and some contrasted it with past experiences as choir members. But the point came

clearly across; they were personally conscious of the fact that community singing was real prayer and they liked it.

"I like praying with the congregation, but not as much as singing."

"Now I enjoy the singing more than I did when I used to go to Church and sing as a choir member."

Most people preferred singing as a congregation to listening to a choir.

"I don't think having a choir is fair. Everyone should be allowed to sing."

"If the choir is singing, I'm left out. You sit there and mentally sing, which really doesn't amount to anything."

"I really want to sing. I don't want to listen. I don't want a choir."

Some people did enjoy a good choir, of course, and were disappointed that we no longer had an excellent choir at St. Rose. At one time we did have a show-piece choir -- men and boys, and good four-part singing. They attained some degree of excellence and were well thought of. But slowly the men began to drop out, practices became burdensome, no recruits stepped in to take the place of those who had left. Under such pressures, the choir faded out of existence.

Within this context, a negligible number of our parishioners, as few as 5 out of the 383 interviewed, had any objections to singing. This, I think, is surprisingly small.

"I don't care for singing. When I go to Church it is to pray not sing. I'm not a singer and I don't ever intend to be one."

"I enjoy perfection. I don't like to hear anybody sing who can't sing."

Others brought up difficulties related to the work involved in singing:

"...too timid to try to sing out."

"If you can't pronounce the words, you can't sing with the others. You feel left out."

There are problems and the honesty with which the problems were revealed is itself encouraging. But for the overwhelming majority, music was something which brought them together. Opposition to community singing may be more extensive in other parishes. The acceptance of song may be due to some circumstances peculiar to the parish -- the skill of the organist, the enthusiasm of the clergy for singing, the large group of men who facilitated the introduction of singing, choice of songs, etc.

Following the Mass with a missal will be automatically conditioned by practical circumstances of active participation. For many years, following the Mass with a missal has been considered the ideal method of attending Mass. Priests, nuns and laity encouraged its use and promoted its sale. In reality, placing the missal in the hands of the laity did not solve the difficult problems of boredom, inattention or restlessness at Mass.

Sofia Cavaletti and Gianni Gobbi, (1964), in their book Teaching Doctrine and Liturgy say: "The use of the missal has been overstressed by many liturgists. After all, the person whose eyes are fastened on the missal cannot follow the movements of the priest which mean so much."

My own experience in interviews substantiates this:

"You're kind of in your own world with the missal."

"Before the recited Mass, I never followed the priest. I was usually way ahead or way behind. I'd be distracted terribly even though I would be reading. When I used to try to concentrate on the prayers in the missal, I wouldn't know what was going on at the altar. I was just reading by myself and not paying much attention to what was going on."

"When I am actively participating in the Mass, I feel a closeness to God. I don't get the same feeling when I use the missal."

"It makes me realize that this particular Mass isn't just for me as I do when I read the missal. The guy next to me has a part in it, and the guy next to him, too."

People felt very much alone at Mass when they used the missal. Others questioned the value of their prayers when using it, finding insufficient concentration and lack of ability to follow the Mass prayerfully. The following remarks were typical of their reactions.

"I've tried reading the missal, but somehow when I'm reading it I feel shut out from the participation completely."

"You can carry away something when you participate, whereas by using the missal it's like going to Mass and being a spectator."

"If I have a missal, it seems like I'm just reading and I don't have any feeling."

"I can't coordinate the use of the missal with the priest's actions at the altar."

"A lot of times I don't even see what the priest is doing at the altar even if I am following it with my missal. I'm not quite sure at what part the priest is."

"I can't keep up with the priest in my parish. If he gave me a two page start, he'd pass me up, so the missal is out."

"I feel rather alone and get lost. It seems the priest is tripping along on a bicycle and I just can't keep up with him."

"You certainly feel as though you are part of the Mass when you are participating. You feel as though you are up at the altar, too. As far as reading the missal for that matter, you can read the missal at home and get the same effect as reading it as at Mass silently. When you respond in church with the priest you get a different feeling."

It was very difficult for me to accept the people's reaction to the missal. I frequently challenged the accuracy of their statements as in the following excerpts:

"You can do an awful lot of reading and very little praying."

"I would think you would have a better concentration using the missal."

"I don't know about you, but I could read and not think about what I'm reading. I can think about dishes, dinner or children and it is just as easy for me. I know. I've done it. But when you are actually participating, you hear the words as well as see them. How can you be remote under those circumstances? I don't know. It's a physical impossibility."

As we made a study of people's feelings and attitudes at Mass, we found that for some the missal has become a real obstacle to participation, and becomes a substitute for the personal involvement which active participation encourages. A rigid attachment to any means of participation is destructive of a true spirit of worship. A kind of burial seems to take place among some people. Many lock themselves within the covers of a book and lose awareness of those about them -- lose awareness of the very action at the altar.

To many, the consideration of the Latin language in the liturgy is now mostly academic. But the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states that steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them. The insights of the people regarding the Latin are significant and it is very helpful to retain an awareness of the laity's experience with the Latin language.

A big obstacle to participation encountered in St. Rose's was the extreme difficulty in coping with the Latin. Again, it is important to understand the struggle of the parishioners with the Latin - this was a definite obstacle to our participation. In addition, pre-occupation with Latin pronunciation becomes a detriment to prayerfulness. Fear of making a mistake causes real emotional blocks within many people.

"I try to pronounce the words and never get finished. I get tongue-tied in the middle and I stop dead."

"I get so nervous. I don't even know how to get the words out. I just can't keep up."

"Learning the Latin responses held us back because we didn't know how to pronounce the words and we were afraid."

"I feel embarrassed. They are our prayers and I can't say them in Latin. I say 'O God, come on help me with this.' I'm afraid to pronounce the words wrong. That's why I keep quiet."

"I can't get to first base with it. After the first line, I'm stuck."

"It's confusing. You say a bunch of words that you have learned to repeat and that's all."

"The words get all mixed up and are ineffective because you don't know what you are saying."

"I don't feel like I'm praying in church when I respond in Latin. I'm just trying hard to pronounce all the words and that's all it is to me. I don't know what I'm saying in the first place."

"People are hesitant to speak out when they can't pronounce the words. They feel kind of foolish and you really do. When you mispronounce the Latin word, you feel kind of silly and then you keep quiet."

Parallel quotations were voiced by both young and old, men and women. Can anyone blame them for resistance to change? Can anyone blame them for wanting to cling to personal prayer -- one was prayer, the other not? People were more expressive and voiced opposition more strongly to the Latin than to interference with private prayer or change. Apparently it is very frustrating and discouraging not to be able to pronounce the Latin words. But most important of all, to people who do not understand it, praying in Latin does not seem to be praying.

Many will feel a nostalgia for the Latin as it was sung or said aloud. "The sound of the Latin is beautiful." "It's universal...that's the keypoint." "I was brought up with it." "The Mass won't be the same without it." "learning the Latin was a challenge." "I'm in favor of the Latin. It's the language of the Church."

The people raised a question about the Latin and analyzed it from two aspects, prayer and understanding. They spoke of a preoccupation with pronunciation of the words, of not being at ease with the language.

"I don't understand the words. Why say something I don't understand? It just doesn't get across at all -- no value -- doesn't mean a thing."

"When I'm praying in Latin, I'm just saying words. I don't know what I'm doing, really, and I think it's better if we don't have it."

"The sound of Latin is beautiful, but there is no meaning, no feeling, no satisfaction; there's nothing there."

"I don't feel like I'm praying in church when I'm responding in Latin. I feel nothing. I'm trying hard to pronounce the words and that's all it is to me."

"How can I mean anything if I don't understand what I'm saying? I'm missing the whole idea of the Mass. I'm afraid to pronounce the words wrong -- that's why I keep quiet. English is simple. I know what I'm talking about in English but to read it in Latin, I can't put my heart and soul into it. In other words, those are just words to me."

People like to understand what they're saying. Participating in a language they do not understand leaves them with no feeling -- no satisfaction. Interest springs from understanding.

"Listen to the ballgame. You have to understand it, right? If I don't understand it, why should I watch it? The same goes for Latin and prayer."

"It might have some merit, the intentions are good, but for your own satisfaction..."

"When you're responding in English, you don't have to stop and read another page or line to know what you've said. You feel it more and more and are aware of what you are saying than if you were responding in Latin. When I say the Our Father in Latin, I can say it with very little flaw, but I don't picture the meaning when I'm saying it."

The conciliar document asks for the training in the Latin language for Latin song. However, the experience of the laity militates against it.

The United States has been spared to an overwhelming degree, the terrible scourge of anti-clericalism which has so dogged the Catholicism of European countries. Yet many scholars have noted the beginnings of a subtle form of anti-clericalism in this country.

Apart from formal anti-clericalism, an alarming "distance" or separation most often exists between clergy and laity. This sense of separation has created an image of the Church expressed by one man in these words:

"In this Church, it was strictly the priest alone."

Or, this one...

"I think it has been a fault of the Catholic Church that the laity is forgotten except for fund-raising purposes!"

Those indictments imply a division in the clergy-laity team. The commentators themselves were unanimous in speaking of the lay commentator as bridging the gulf between priest and people, as establishing a bond which united everyone.

"When people see a layman in the position of commentator, it's like a link between the priest and the people."

"There is a great breach between the clergy and the people. Commentating by laymen is breaking down this vast gulf. It's a bridge that is bringing priest and people closer together... at least a little bit."

"A lot of criticism disappeared after you made laymen commentators. This is a big selling point!"

"You are no longer an individual. You become a part. You are right along with the priest where you never were before."

"I am honored that I can do a thing like this. I don't like to say that it puts me on the level with the priest, but it does bring me closer. Commentating brings about a perfect relationship for the lay people in the Church. It is a link between the layman and the Mass."

In other words, their very presence within the confines of the sanctuary broke down the barriers. "Barriers" is the exact word, although the reality involved may be only a psychological one. Many times I have heard priests complain that they "couldn't get participation started," and on further questioning I learned that they, the priests, were doing the commentating; and it didn't work.

Priests, I confess, too often overlook the values of laymen with the very organizational structure of the Church. But when this happens in the parochial liturgy, it is unfortunate. When the commentator is a layman, the organization church takes on a new image. There is cooperation, there is sharing, there is friendship.

People sense many things about the presence of laymen as commentators, and one of the most notable is the distinction between the priest preaching and the commentator leading. "Preaching here has a pejorative undertone which has nothing to do with the sermon or homily because the sermon is still a high point in "their" liturgy. But our parish expressed their natural resentment at "constantly being told what to do". This holds true for us all; we resent preaching, but not so much do we resent being led. Many, many times we are grateful for good leadership, something which comes rather naturally to people who have

tasted the good air of democracy. This cooperation between the priest, the lay "ministers", and the community has a special effect on bringing the community closer to the holy action of the Mass.

"In the Service, a guy would rather hang around with a bunch of privates than he would with his sergeant. This is a similar situation. When a priest is in the pulpit, everyone sees the white collar and black cassock and says to himself, 'Here comes another sermon. He's going to tell me that something I am doing is wrong, or I should do something better.' If he says, 'Turn to page so and so,' the people say 'Here he comes again.' When I am the commentator, they know that somebody the same as they are going to lead them. People accept me because I am not a priest -- and I am participating in the Mass just as they are. They listen to me better than they would a priest because I am just like them."

"The priest says, 'Don't do this, don't do that' in sermons. Sermons are fine, but how much good do they do? Isn't the example of even a few people going to do a lot more good than all the sermons, preaching and all the theories and everything else?"

The layman as commentator inspires the congregation to fuller participation through emulation.

"People feel, 'If my neighbor can do it, I can do it.' Everybody knows a priest can do it, but if you are to have lay participation you just have to have lay leadership."

"Before at Mass, it was only the priest. Now, seeing the regular layman, people feel they should participate more."

"In going through this Catholic education, we were always being preached at. At the same time, we were never given an opportunity to do something."

"The priest probably did a better job, probably made fewer mistakes. Maybe he gave better explanations of the Mass, but I think the people, over a period of time, actually appreciate the fact that one of our own is up there. Instead of the priest extending his own activities a little further, he is giving us more to do."

A visible sharing of the liturgy between priest and laity has definite effects on a parish. People become more vocal, it would seem because now they have something to talk about, because now there is something which they can point to with pride as their own product. In the words of the commentators:

"Even though a priest might do it better technically, the advantage is in the attitude of the person in the pew. From day to day, from Sunday to Sunday, the overall impression -- because a layman is the commentator -- is that the congregation at large is taking part in the Mass. The priest may be our representative, but he is too remote."

"My enthusiasm for the thing, and my delight in it, is that it leads me closer to what the Mass should be. Lay participation is closer to the community offering the Mass rather than having one estate, the priesthood, and the other estate, the laity, operating on two different sides of the altar rail, each more or less independent with no rapport back and forth, with no community action. My delight and enthusiasm comes from the thought that this is the right idea. This is the people taking part in the Mass."

"We can't get away from the idea that the layman is the better representative of laymen than the priest. If the laity is to participate in the Mass, then a member of the community must participate. This is not jealousy or resentment, or any idea that we ought to regain some power from the clergy. Rather it's the idea that if the people are to participate, they ought to participate in the way appropriate to them. A representative of the people is the appropriate thing here. Therefore a lay commentator is what makes all the difference. I'd call it the ultimate in active participation in the Mass - lay commentators."

These are men speaking who have a deep sense of their own leadership, and as we will see later, who are looked upon by the parish with pride as being leaders. Such phenomena have some intriguing implications in many other areas, but certainly one should pause to consider that lay leadership of this kind might provide the key to militant Catholic leadership at a time when the Church needs more than ever to have all her members stand up and be counted for their faith. If I may speak as an observer, and all on my own for a moment, I must say that they have become much more identified with the Church. They are more responsible, more eager to undertake apostolic works; not all have been close to the Church, and some were almost total strangers before their involvement in participation.

Active participation in the parish has become a reality at St. Rose of Lima not because of the singular efforts of the priests, or the efforts of the laity who presumably got fed up with being left out (etc., etc.), but because of the efforts of both groups. As one man said, "I think the laity put it across finally. But, it was only because two priests insisted that this had to work, and looked for ways to make it work. Remember, you never thought of the lay commentator when you first started the singing." Actually, when that remark was made, I really had forgotten that fact. It was teamwork, a clergy-laity team, working together that won out. Successful teamwork in the ritual of the Mass has a way of extending itself successfully into the rest of the parish life.

"Lay people should have more voice in the Church. Not just at Mass, but in other things as well. A person should be made to feel a part of everything that goes on in the parish. Why not? We feel that we are part of everything that goes on in our own homes. I think this will bring people

closer to the Church. Why shouldn't it? In the first place, it means they are willing to do little things they are asked to do. If they don't try for that voice, that means they are not interested. Take CFM, for instance. When I joined CFM, I had not done in five years -- from the time I was out of school until I got married -- the things I did in one year after I had joined CFM. This was simply because I knew I was a part of things. The same applies to the Church. If people are given a voice, they will respect it and love it."

"It's nice to say that this is the age of the layman, but there can be no age of the layman if he is not given anything to do. He must have some function in Church society, just as he does in secular society."

Priests are apt to view the role of the lay commentator solely from the practical standpoint of helping the congregation to participate better. It is not unusual to label the exuberance and enthusiasm of commentators about their jobs as superficial. Such a degree of professional "snobbery" is unjustifiable, especially when we examine more deeply the reasons why these men appreciate their role so much. Those reasons are solidly grounded.

Commentating whetted their interest in the Mass. This happened in our parish in spite of the fact that many of the men were not able to read articles or books on the Mass. In view of the failure of many of our past efforts to generate an increased interest in the Mass, this personal success of lay commentating is all the more remarkable. The sacrificial action of oblation takes on new meaning for the men; it begins to be a living reality; they become more closely identified with Christ as his instruments.

"My understanding of the Mass, through my participation as a commentator, has helped me to grasp the importance of the Mass."

"When I started narrating, only then did I begin to understand the various parts of the Mass, the various levels and stages of progression in the Mass."

"We've all gotten a better appreciation and understanding of the Mass."

"We have learned the Mass because we are narrating the Mass. Commentating has forced our attention on it. You learn more about the Mass when you are doing something."

"I'm a lot more concerned with the meaning of the Mass. I so desire everyone in the congregation at Mass to desire it and feel it the way I do; so I try to put the greatest amount of feeling that I can in the reading. I want everybody there to share the same things that I'm experiencing."

"Being a narrator and learning more about the Mass was finding an outlet for my expression to give and get more appreciation. It is so important for us to give instead of just being blotters and soaking everything up -- anything anybody throws at us. When you soak everything up, all you are is a sponge. That's even a better expression than a blotter. A blotter blots something and it is going to show back, even if it's gooey. But a sponge just soaks everything up. All you have to do if you are a sponge is lay there. You soak."

"I feel I am part of the congregation. At the same time, I am representing all the people. If the priest is a representative of Christ, what is the narrator? As far as I am concerned, he is a tool in the hands of the Lord to help the rest of the people. There is a lot of personal satisfaction in knowing that I am being used by God. I feel that when I read, God is flowing through this reading. I am merely using the talents and abilities which God has given me in the best way I can toward expressing him. It seems God is trying to speak through me at this Mass, through the ordinary lay person, in a humble, quiet sort of way so that the people can in some way feel the spirit of the Mass."

"It does me good. I'm looked up to. People are depending on me. I get a great deal of satisfaction out of it, a great deal. It makes me feel really good that I am an instrument in leading others."

"It was something I appreciated being able to do, so there was satisfaction in it. It was something I thought was eminently worthwhile, so there was a sense of conviction that this was something good to be done."

"I feel this is the closest I could come to doing some duty in a priestly manner. This is a great accomplishment for me. I can't do anything better. When I get through with a Mass, I feel I have accomplished something. I wish I could do it more often."

Not to be overlooked would be the good influence upon the commentator's family.

Without a doubt, the wife and children share the experience and feelings of the lay commentator.

"My boy thinks this is the greatest thing when we say 'This is Daddy's Sunday.' There isn't every wife or kid that can say 'my husband,' or 'my Daddy' does this. My wife thinks it is something terrific. Once in a while she knocks me because she says: 'Here you are a commentator and what did you say?'"

Does it seem strange that these men look forward to appreciate, and place such a high importance on commentating? That's the way it is, so much so that when one of the commentators said, "I feel sorry for anybody who is not a narrator because I don't think until I started doing this that I even appreciated the Mass." he stated the sentiments of all.

Not everyone sees the lay commentator in such a saving light. The negative reactions range from opposition to tolerance to indifference. Some found the lay commentator hard to accept. A few objected outright. A small number preferred a priest, especi-

ally for reading the Scriptures:

"That's a priest's job and it should not be substituted or given to anyone else."

"At first it was kind of hard for me to get used to having a commentator. It seems as though when the priest is the commentator, it holds more meaning."

"I don't think it's good to have a lay commentator. It introduces a form of acting. The man is up there reading the Gospel, something off a paper, just like on the stage. When the priest reads the Gospel, he knows what he is reading. You ask a priest a question, he knows what he is talking about. The lay commentator probably could not answer. He'd probably say 'Wait a minute. I'll go call Father John.' If you go to Church, you want it to be conducted by a priest."

"I told my neighbors about having a lay person narrate the Mass. They didn't like it at all. They said they didn't know how I could stand it every Sunday. I told them I didn't like it either, but I go because I have to go on Sundays anyway."

"I look up to the priest. If I hear the Epistle and Gospel from the priest, I like it much better. I believe the priest should have that honor."

"It's really a privilege giving this job to a lay person -- but it was just too much for me at first."

"I think having the commentator is a good approach, having the layman guide the people along, help them learn the Mass. But I like the Gospel read by the priest."

"I enjoy the lay commentator better now, but if the priest would do it, it would add a little more feeling to it."

A few others commented in a parallel vein, not really objecting to the layman reading the Epistle and the Gospel, but preferring a priest. Some others looked upon the lay

commentator from a more practical standpoint. They looked upon him in the light that he was helping the priest, "substituting for him."

Some parishes have begun active participation without commentators and continue that way. Some subscribe to the position that commentators are an unnecessary nuisance. Do people feel a need for a commentator? Here I think it's best to let them speak entirely on their own. There is so much wisdom in the following that any additional remarks would be ludicrous.

"A prompter is really necessary to put over a project such as active participation. You have to have someone to coach the people."

"When there is no commentator, and I get beside somebody who's going like the dickens, I'm lost."

"You've got to have a good leader who can sing at each Mass -- a forceful leader."

"If the Mass is to be an "undistractor" then it has to be led. You have to know what you are doing, when to respond. Once we had an all-school Mass - a Dialogue Mass. We freshmen were up in the balcony and we couldn't tell what was going on. They lost us completely. Then we had a retreat and we were down closer to the altar and we could at least hear the person who was leading. It was much better."

"The commentator has to be a leader. He starts you off but if you don't hear him after that, you kind of die away."

"The commentator should be seen! Don't have him hidden behind a grill like a voice coming from the wilderness. That's part of the trouble at this one parish. The man who plays the organ says, 'Page mumble, mumble, mumble.' You don't hear it for one thing so it doesn't work. The commentator should direct the participation. The system at St. Rose is

effective. There is no doubt about the commentator directing the congregation and the congregation responding. Any crowd can be directed and that's what a commentator does. You don't have chaos. You don't have anarchy. You have a directed group, a group that is acting together because they are being led. Half the reasons why people don't participate, why they don't sing, is because they are not sure of themselves. They would be sure of themselves if they were directed, if they felt what they were doing was correct, if they knew that when they stood up they were supposed to be standing and so forth."

"If there is somebody to help guide the people and keep them together, you fall into the spirit much better."

"You have to be together to have it enjoyable, but if somebody starts a few syllables behind you, you're lost and they're probably lost, too."

"I think it is an advantage to have these men there. They have told me things about the Mass I never knew before."

"I don't understand most of what is going on at the altar so the commentator helps me."

"A lot of people who come to Church don't even know what they came for. When a commentator is there he tells them and keeps them on their toes. It helps a person put his mind to God."

"I think a lay person is fine. I don't even think that it is very important whether a priest or layman does it -- it's the way they lead the people that is important. They have to be able to get across to the people the idea of participation at Mass. They have to be able to communicate. I think a priest could do it just as well as a lay person. Whoever it is must be effective in his speaking."

"I didn't even give it a thought. It's read and I listen to it the same as if the priest were doing it. I wouldn't even know the priest wasn't doing it. It's just that I know most of the voices now and I know it is not a priest. It doesn't bother me a bit. I don't think it makes any difference."

Why do lay people prefer a layman as commentator to a priest? Why do they feel more at ease? What is responsible for this difference of attitude, and the different atmosphere created at Mass?

"It's good to know that he is a layman like yourself. It's like a part of you that brings a closeness between us all. Someone is guiding you without a pall of orders descending upon you."

"A layman is better because he is one of us. To me, the mere sight of a man dressed in street clothes in the role of commentator holds appeal. I think I stand for the average person in saying that."

"When the priest was there, I had the feeling he was trying to teach us something. But when the layman got up there I thought now this guy learned it -- maybe now we can learn it too."

"I was going to say that having a priest there would put him again in the role of teacher and we would be the pupils. He's teaching us religion again all during the Mass, not only at the time of the sermon. Having a lay commentator up there -- he isn't teaching us. He's leading us, and we are all doing it together. We are very important to the commentator and he is very important to us. We are on his level. We don't feel that he knows any more than we do. He's one of us. He has learned right along with us."

"When a priest does it, it sounds more like an instruction. When a layman does it, the teaching tone disappears. When the Gospel is read by the layman, it's different. The priest has to do it, but coming from the layman, it loses the overtone of obligation. There is a different feeling there; I feel the lay commentator is speaking to me. When a priest talks, I know there is an instruction coming. The layman speaks for everybody, on behalf of everybody."

"I think when a priest reads the Epistle and the Gospel, he tends to preach it. When a layman does it, he does it with a little more feeling. A lot of priests get up there and rattle it off so fast you don't even know what he said."

"When the priest makes announcements, he makes them with authority, and there are a lot of people who resent this. Priests will pound on different points. The layman's approach is more subtle, more in keeping with our own train of thought."

"If the priest is commentating, you feel he's trying to make you do it. But with a layman, you yourself want to do it. It's better now."

"He's just an ordinary Joe like you or me. You feel more or less with him, that he is one of us. He is not ordering you around. You're more inclined to go along with him."

"We feel closer to the Mass, closer to God, closer to the Church when a layman is the commentator."

People see the position of lay commentator as a positive value to the whole community. Some indicated that as the image of the Church changes, their attitude toward the Church changes.

"It gives the whole congregation a better attitude toward the Church. Some of them may not admit it because of some old feeling they may have thinking a priest should be there, but actually in their hearts they all feel better if a layman is there. They realize the fact that the Church doesn't feel she is elevated too high above the layman, that the layman is part of the Church. This makes us feel at home. If a priest did everything and the layman was kept out, he wouldn't have the same feeling toward the Church. It's really nice at St. Rose. That's not only my feeling. I've heard it from other people, many of whom were strangers to the parish. They said they were never at a Church which had had such a Mass. It showed the Church wanted the public to take an interest in it. The only way you can get the public

to take an interest is by giving them a part in it. If they had a part in it, it would even interest people who aren't taking a part. They would get interested in it just the same."

"It gives us a feeling of being closer to the Mass and everything that is going on; in other words, it unifies. We feel more a part of the Mass because the commentator is one of us."

"To me, the altar was some place where you can never go because you can never quite reach it. There's something beautiful about being close to the altar. The few times that I got close there was a marvelous feeling. But to me the altar was always so out of reach -- because we could never get as close as we would really like. The only times we ever got to go close to the altar were when we made our First Communion, when we graduated from grammar school, and then again when we graduated from high school. Just being close was perfectly breathtaking. If you had someone at the altar, it would seem like it was more in reach, taking away that attitude that people seem to have that it is a stage -- the priest acts on the stage; you're in the audience and you're only there to watch. It's like going to the theater. You can never get on the stage, you can never come in as close contact as you would like with the actors. If you have a lay commentator, it bridges the gap more than when we had a priest because that seemed like just adding another player to the cast. It's much better to have a lay person as a commentator because it brings the priest closer to the congregation. It seems we are more closely related. If a priest were the commentator, it would be just another member of the clergy at the altar. It is better to have a lay person."

"The lay commentator is one of us as he is participating. It makes the layman feel better and more important to have some part, no matter how small."

"The more people that are involved, the better it is. It becomes more than just a one-man show. It becomes more effective for participation."

"Ordinarily the priest does everything for you. You don't have anything to do for yourself. The lay commentator is speaking for me; he bridges a gap between the priest and the lay person."

The Church has tried to teach lay people to be lay apostles. With the people helping the priest along as far as the recited Mass goes, it seems the people get closer to the priest and seem to work right with him. This is what the Church is striving for -- lay apostles. What better way for people to become lay apostles than by coming closer to God through the Mass?"

"What better way indeed? Such spontaneous and unrehearsed choices of words reveal many basic things. People draw sharp contrasts between priests and laymen; they are agonizingly conscious of the distance between themselves and the priest, or is it the Church? There is an immediacy, a closeness, between them and a lay commentator who is "part of us", "one of us", who is not "barking orders."

The lay commentator is not authoritarian, because he dares not be. For whatever reasons, the priest's manner is described as authoritarian: "will pound away at you," "ordering you around," "tends to preach it." Let no one think this description is appealing -- "Pall of orders descending upon you," "trying to teach us," and the list could go on and on. The commentator, a layman, leads the laity to participation. He is not unlike the playing captain. His team members "feel with him," because he keeps with "our own train of thought."

The commentator is linked more to the congregation; he helps the community fulfill their role. The layman who reads the Scriptures is somehow part of them, too. One of the joys of participation is inextricably linked up with the person of the lay commentator, the sense of belonging, the welcome and acceptance in the Church, by the Church. This is something new to most people, at least.

Thus the commentator helps the congregation to participate - that is to sense the real appropriateness of their presence at Mass. The commentator is the servant of the people and yet he is clearly one of the congregation, identified with them, an honored representative, an equal among equals.

It is fitting then that one of the congregation steps into the role of uniting them to the priest, or leading them, or helping them to participate.

Summarily, people feel "with" the layman commentator. His presence encourages them to imitate his example and join in. The honor which the parish accords these men is great. They become a source of other commentators. When Pope Pius XII said, "You are the Church," he expressed a reality which takes on flesh and blood in the liturgy celebrated in this fashion, for here there is a sensible closeness to the Church, to Christ the Priest; there is representation, there is sharing, there is the union of our Baptismal promises, the love of our one Eucharist. Perhaps the view of the value of the layman as commentator for the person in the pew is best summarized in this brief exchange --

"It's really bringing the Mass down to us."

"No it's not -- It's bringing us up to the Mass."

"It's ours. It's more a sharing..."

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER STUDIES
RESULTING FROM PRESENT THESIS

In this study we observed a behavioral change take place in the people. It was limited to the liturgical context. Ritual changes have affected their attitude toward the Mass. The general direction is positive and constructive. The people have a new experience of worship in the Church. A community comes alive within the walls of the Church. But it is important not to exaggerate the values gained or experienced through active participation at Mass.

What is the relevance of this behavioral change to life? How relevant is the new liturgical experience to the world outside the Church? What do the group discussions do to reveal people's real feelings? Do they really reveal inner feelings? There was no spontaneous response in the group discussions about a change in social attitudes outside the Church. A number of times I brought up the question of the effect of active participation at Mass upon their personal life and their attitudes toward others at work, in the neighborhood, with their families. I received a dead response. No one was aware of a noticeable change, or at least was not able to express it. However, one cannot measure from this study whether there was any actual effect upon the attitude of people toward life situations.

We can raise such questions as: As a result of active participation at Mass, do people accept more readily the social doctrine of the Church as expressed, for example, in

the papal letters, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*? Do people take a greater interest in and think more Christian about international life, politics, social and economic areas, racial harmony and justice? Is there any effect upon the stability of family life? Do people really grow in love through participation in the liturgy?

Some have written about the impact of active participation in the liturgy in these areas. This may take place in some parishes. However, I was not able to detect any significant changes from a great number of interviews I made on the subject. Really, I detected no changes.

The Mass may not be as uninteresting as before, as boring or as drawn out with active participation, but I did not see that it made any profound change in the people's attitude toward a Christian solution of social, economic and racial problems. Active participation does take away the humdrum of experienced nothingness in the Mass, but, sad to say, some who speak glowingly of active participation remain Birchite in their social philosophy. Others are as strongly racist as before active participation; nor do many plunge with greater eagerness into apostolic endeavors or pulse with a greater missionary spirit. All this points to an even greater need of renewal in the liturgy, to meaningful changes, to a liturgy that would develop a Christian social conscience.

The Constitution on the Church creates new interest in the Church as a community of faithful. It opens the door to the laity, allowing them to accept a greater share of responsibility in the Church. We read much about the fact that the parish is a community of faithful. To what extent has active participation at Mass developed a spirit of co-

responsibility in a parish? The study does not answer the question, but only shows a greater awareness as a community by the people. Will the experience of the community at the liturgy carry over into parish life and activities? Will the concept of collegiality find a practical expression in parish structure and activity? Does active participation at Mass help create a community or has it only removed barriers from a sign, clarified the sign, that expresses to the community to the extent that it already exists? Do people continue to progress in their understanding of the Mass through active participation? Does active participation continue to hold people's interest or have negative feelings set in as a result of the repetitiousness of the liturgy?

This phenomenological study reveals many behavioral changes toward worship that have taken place and suggests the need of further study of these values and the effectiveness of the new liturgy regarding real life situations.

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LIFE

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Reverend John J. Jankauskas has been read and approved by the director of the thesis. Furthermore, the final copies have been examined by the director and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

29 Jan 1968
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