

The American Lutheran



INDIAN ENVOY ACCEPTS CROP GIFT



A nation-wide appeal for grain contributions for India was opened in Chicago by the Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP) in the presence of the Indian Ambassador, Madame Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. CROP is shipping immediately 40,000 bushels of wheat to Bombay. Madame Pandit said, in accepting the gift: "This wheat will not only feed my people but also revive their spirit and show them the warmth and generosity of the American people, and it will build a bridge of friendship between our countries." Madame Pandit is seen above with officials of CROP, from left to right: John D. Metzler, Church World Service; Madame Pandit, Ray F. Murray, Catholic Rural Life, and Clifford E. Dahlin, Lutheran World Relief.

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The Mass Restored to Its Evangelical Form by Luther

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Note: This is the third chapter of Friedrich Lochner's "Der Hauptgottesdienst" in translation.

As the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, and Luther's liturgical writings show, the Main Service retained its customary name and the Church of the true faith continued to call it the Mass. This is a term that designates the holy service, the cult, and corresponds to the Greek Liturgia, as the Apology, Article XII, emphasizes over against the papistic derivation from the Hebrew Misbeach, altar of sacrifice, when it states: "Missa and Liturgia do not mean sacrifice; Missa signifies in the Hebrew the collected gift of the people. In the beginning the Christians also retained this custom. Coming together, they brought food and drink for the poor. And this custom came from the Jews, who were obligated to bring such contributions to their feasts, and called them Missa." In the Scandinavian-Lutheran Church this name is still used to designate the Main Service, but in the German-Lutheran Church it fell into disuse later, although in the days of the author's youth the Communion was still called the Office, in the Nuerenberg area, and the sermon of the Main Service the Office-Sermon.

Luther's Evangelical Procedure

The retention of the name Mass alone indicates that Luther did not intend to produce anything new in the outward form of worship but merely to lead back to the ancient proper form. In general, Luther's entire reformation did not aim at negation and destruction, but at restoration. It purposed merely to do away with whatever was contrary to God's Word in teaching and life, and whatever had accumulated as harmful leaven in the course of time. After he had begun the Reformation and first cast his eyes also on the administration of the Sacraments in the Roman Church, he cried: "The words of salvation and life are shut up, as the ark of the Lord when it stood beside Dagon in the idol temple, but the ark of the Lord must open a way for itself!" His penetrating eye could not but see that here the Word of the Lord was buried under a multitude of ceremonies that benumbed by its very bulk and diverted the attention of the faithful from the one necessary thing. But how did Luther permit the ark to open a way for itself? Not in the manner of a Zwingli and his followers, who here broke radically with the past and

abolished everything, particularly in outward things, that was not based on an express word of Scripture and had come into vogue after the time of the Apostles. Luther proceeded with extreme caution and forbearance according to principles drawn from the inmost lifspring of Scripture and truly evangelical practice. Following these principles, he unrelentingly swept out everything that was intrinsically papistic leaven and part of the abominable sacrifice of the Mass, even though it had only the odor of sacrifice. On the other hand, he separated the rubbish that had been given only a churchly coloring from the things that were in harmony with the pure doctrine and proved to be the common property of the universal Church, with the special consideration that they further and serve the Word and Sacrament. In his Formula Missae he wrote: "We assert that it is not and never has been in our minds to abolish entirely the whole formal cultus of God, but to cleanse that which is in use, which has been vitiated by most abominable additions, and to point out a pious use. He declares the same in his Order of 1523: "The liturgy now in common use everywhere, like the preaching office, has a high Christian origin. But just as the preaching office has been debased and impaired by spiritual tyrants, so also the liturgy has been corrupted by the hypocrites. Now as we do not abolish the preaching office on this account but desire to restore it again to its right and proper place, so it is not our intention to discontinue the liturgy but to restore it again to proper and correct usage."

The Origin of the Latin Rite

The intention was merely to cleanse the Liturgy then in general use and to show the proper Christian usage. Luther commends the Liturgy as having a noble, lofty Christian origin. The service he has in mind is the structure of the Mass in its chief parts, as the Western Church received it from the older Eastern Church. This liturgy the Western Church retained until the days of the Reformation, although "abominably corrupted by many additions" in the course of time. Since 1570 the Roman Church has it as its permanent and invariable service, with all its corrupting additions. We have a picture of the original form of the Mass in the testimony of St. Justin, quoted previously, and of its amplification in the quotation from the Apostolic Constitutions. Also

in the latter there is still nothing that has the odor of expiatory sacrifice. Although the lengthy prayer connected with the Consecration in this Clementine Liturgy designates the Bread and Wine as an offering, no meritorious offering takes place but merely the material offering of the elements. It is expressly stated: "... and beseech Thee that Thou wouldest favourably regard the gifts that lie before Thee, O God that lackest for nought, and be well pleased with them for the honour of Thy Christ, and send down Thy Holy Spirit upon this sacrifice, the witness of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, that He (the Holy Spirit) may shew this bread to be the Body of Thy Christ and this cup to be the Blood of Thy Christ, that they who partake of Him may be strengthened unto piety, may receive the forgiveness of sins, may be delivered from the devil and his deceit, may be filled with the Holy Spirit, may become worthy of Thy Christ, may receive eternal life, and that Thou mayest be reconciled unto them, O Lord Almighty." When, however, the Arcan-Discipline, that is, the keeping secret of the Mysteries (Holy Baptism, Lord's Supper, Apostolic Creed, Lord's Prayer), practiced since the Second Century, had gradually disappeared, the Order of the Roman Mass developed since the Fourth Century. This order is a pronounced improvement over the structure received from the primitive Eastern Church, as to clarity, effect and beauty. Nevertheless it is greatly corrupted by the abomination of the sacrifice in the Mass, around which the whole service revolves, and also by the Transubstantiation, the withholding of the Cup, the prayers to the saints, Private Mass, and the Masses for the souls of the departed.

Luther's Accomplishment

Luther swept and cleansed this liturgy that had such a lofty origin but was later frightfully corrupted under the papacy by the abomination of the sacrifice and other additions. He cleansed it as one restores an old master painting by removing dust and daubs of profane hands, or as one restores a noble structure by ridding it of unnecessary and disfiguring accessories, so that it stands again in the beauty of its true form. Luther gave the Mass back to the people of God in its original and beautiful form, the Mass conformed to the Gospel.