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In Chapel Sunday

Rev. Bloy Writes On "Jazz Mass"

By The Rev. Myron R. Bloy, Jr.
Episcopal Chaplain At M.I.T.

This coming Sunday, at their regular service in the MIT Chapel at 10:30 a.m., the Protestant Christian congregation will sing their praises accompanied by a jazz combo. This so-called "Jazz Mass" officially "The 50th Century Folk Mass" was written by English clergyman Geoffrey Beaumont, the MIT combo that plays it is made up of students Jerry Barevich '64 (piano), Jim Bo- heaston '64 (trumpet), and Dave Ketter '65 (drums).

Needless to say, the very idea of singing jazz versions of Psalm, Kyrie, Senex, Lord's Prayer, Agnus Dei, Gloria in excelsis, and Hymn honors both the religious and musical traditions that at first, but the MIT congregation which has sung the Jazz Mass several times in the last two years has found it a surprisingly appropriate means of restoring the real meaning of worship. I think the best way of illustrating the profound appropriateness of jazz as a vehicle for worship is to tell the following story from the Old Testament (2 Samuel 6).

While the sacred ark of the Lord was being returned to Israel after it had been taken back in battle from the Philistines, "David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals; but, "as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul (and David's wife) looked out the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart." Later, when David returned to bless his own household, Michal greeted him with sarcasm & bitterness for thus demeaning himself before the common people. David replied to his wife, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appear to me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord—and I will make merry before the Lord!" The writer then significantly adds, "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death."

This story has the single-purposed clarity of a parable: the thanksgiving spirit of the king who accepts himself as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord and I will make merry before the Lord! and the bitter wife who is bound by her social pride and thus blinded to the glory of the Lord, her sterility thus simply the physical sign of her spiritual lifelessness.

Our congregation can see in this Old Testament story a peculiarly relevant word which we must listen to, we can certainly say that this so-called "Jazz Mass" is true to its nature of worship when it is true to its own nature. In either words, our congregation believes that we must be able to say together in the Chapel to offer to God not our "religious" selves especially got up for occasions of public worship, but our selves in solidarity with the students who believe themselves in the interests of truth, the openness to change so characterizing the MIT community often suggest to us casually in playing kind that it must be difficult for a congregation of the Church even to exist in a place like MIT. But, in fact, the exact opposite is true: it is precisely the freedom from a sentimentalized past, the readiness to experiment boldly in the interests of truth, the openness to change so characteristic of MIT that leads us to rejoice, in the midst of the Church's Mass, in the characteristic qualities of the Church's life long burdened under the weight of dead custom.

Military Engineers Tour
St. Lawrence Seaway

Members of the MIT student chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers toured the St. Lawrence Seaway this weekend. Eighteen students, with two faculty advisors, were flown by the U.S. Air Force to Massena, New York, after classes on Thursday, October 11, and returned early Saturday afternoon.

The group sighted the 45-mile International Rapids Section of the Seaway for chartered bus on Friday. In this section, vessels were raised or lowered, 30 feet, by a system of locks and dams.

The students were flown to Eisenhower, Oswego and Iroquois locks during their docking operations. At the Robert Moses Power Dam, the students inspected the American and the Canadian generating stations.