

REV. EDWARD FOLEY ACCEPTS 2021 McMANUS AWARD

On September 30, 2021, the Federation awarded its highest honor to Father Edward Foley, OFM, Capuchin in recognition of his decades of service to formation, and scholarship. What follows is the full text of his acceptance speech.



There are multiple reasons why the gift of this honor is deeply appreciated. One basis of this delight is the decades of collaboration I have enjoyed with the FDLC, including presentations at your annual meetings stretching back into the last millennium, writing for your newsletter, and valuing the support of this organization in the publication of three quite successful books through Liturgical Press, beginning with the 2007 Commentary on the General Instruction.

While all organizations are composed of people, it is ultimately the people who make the organization, and over the years I have relished relationships with many of you and your colleagues. Some have been collaborators in other organizations or liturgical ventures. When I was with you in Chicago on your 50th anniversary I was delighted to see how many of us shared a learning space – whether that was in a classroom at Notre Dame, Catholic Theological Union, or some other venue – often so long ago that the ambiguous distinction between teacher and student has happily evaporated. Rita has been an especially thoughtful and gracious connection and renders this moment markedly genial.

A third reason why this is a treasured moment is the honorable namesake of this award. While I did not know him well, I did have some personal and professional interactions with Monsignor McManus. Most memorably, when I was a doctoral student his invaluable international connections helped me acquire subvention grants for my dissertation, eventually published by the University of Fribourg en Suisse under the direction of Bishop Anton Hänggi of *Præx Eucharistica* fame.

Fredrick R. McManus was a true *vir catholicus*, a relentless visionary whose conciliar spirit and instincts lay not only at the foundations of this organization but also helped birth the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, establish a central office of the Liturgical Conference in Washington, DC, and serve as a cornerstone for the secretariat for the International Commission on English in the Liturgy. He was one very energetic gentleman.

I remember when he was in his early 80's he was the recipient of the *Jubilare Deo* award from NPM. His written response to the bestowal of that honor was published in *Pastoral Music* under the title "Far From Turning Back." With characteristic optimism in the reform bolstered by his sometimes unvarnished bluntness, Monsignor McManus concluded his remarks to that honor by noting that

"Bold liturgical inculturation ... has not been embraced with much official enthusiasm in recent years, certainly not in the stalemate and worse of *Liturgiam authenticam* and *Varietates legitimæ*. But," he continued, "inculturation and progress cannot be denied. And as we develop the present strengths of a reformed liturgy, we can look to a bright future for [NPM]. Far from turning back," he concludes, "far from hesitating or standing still, we move forward and upward. We see liturgical music as the movement of the Holy Spirit of God in the Church."¹

The spirit of Monsignor McManus endures in this organization and in a real way hovers over this gathering for me. And that spirit nudges me to wonder what vision he might have regarding the topic you have chosen for study at this meeting, i.e., the *Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar*. How would he muse on the phenomenon of live-streaming, the digital extension of church naves into living rooms, and the reframing of our sanctuaries by computer screens and I-pads? What might he think about the dedication of brick and mortar, glass and steel edifices in an era when the solids of granite and marble are transformed by the algorithms of cyber space, subsequently flung into the ether we call the Internet?

While I understand it is not your typical parish, I wonder what the visionary sage would say about a parish where I have presided and preached for some 14 years, that in pre-pandemic times welcomed up to 3,000 worshippers from over 200 zip codes on an average Sunday across its 7 Masses. Live streaming of the 5:00 p.m. Mass Sunday evening had been going on for a few years before we were ever confronted with a lockdown and on an average Sunday would register around 300 hits.ⁱⁱ The first Sunday during the shuttering of Churches in Chicago in March of 2020, the parish combined its St. Patrick's celebration with its first livestreamed 10:00 a.m. Mass, and garnered 36,502 hits.ⁱⁱⁱ Even today, when the church is filling up again and the Mass schedule is expanding, the 10:00 a.m. Mass during the month of August 2021 had an average connection rate to over 5000 devices – which could easily translate to anywhere from 6,000 to 8,000 digital participants or at least twice as many worshippers as on an average Sunday in pre-COVID days.^{iv}

Some think that eventually we will all get over this pandemic and the challenges it has posed to education and business and worship, but I am not so sure. I wonder aloud if the tectonic shift from face-to-face to digital is here to stay. Over a decade ago as I was acquiring certification as an on-line instructor, I kept hearing from educators of every stripe that on-line learning was the very future of higher education across the globe. How quickly that has become to pass. Analogously, I think the unanticipated transition from physical proximity to altar, ambo and assembly to the digital interconnected of congregation and communion via computer is here to stay. In the prophetic language of Monsignor McManus, how do we avoid hesitation or standing still and move forward and upward in the midst of this new reality?

We have tackled the wedding of technology and worship before. In the 20th century radio and eventually television emerged as new pastoral tools for reaching believers incapable of being physically present for Mass. One of the earliest examples occurred in Australia when Sydney was chosen as the site for the 1928 Eucharistic Congress. Catholic organizers of the Congress considered it a prime moment for evangelization at a time when over 95% of the Australian population was Christian and almost 25% Roman Catholic. Consequently, Catholic leadership rented time on a newly established radio, first broadcasting special services from Sydney's St. Mary's Cathedral leading up to a live broadcast of the Congress' opening Mass.^v

In the late 1940's Roman Catholic Mass was first televised, initially on Christmas eve from Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral in 1948, then the following year Boston's Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Such moves were not without controversy. The celebrated German theologian Karl Rahner (d. 1984) strongly objected to televised Mass, arguing that "philistines of the 21st century" should not be allowed to view whatever they wanted while "sitting in an armchair and ... chewing a roll" (Rahner, 182-3).^{vi} I have never dared to say this before in my academic career but at least on this point, Rahner was wrong. Despite such objections the number of televised Masses grew. Already in 1955, the Archdiocese of Boston inaugurated the Catholic TV Network. This service continues yet today. As such productions multiplied, they were increasingly billed as Masses for "Shut-ins." This evolution acknowledged another group of folks regularly deprived of the Eucharist: the sick or the elderly unable to regularly fulfill their Sunday obligation. A Canadian version of "Mass for Shut-ins," first appearing in 1963, is one of the longest running shows in that country's television history (MacDonald).^{vii} The practice is so widespread in the United States that in 1996 the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops published "Guidelines for Televising the Liturgy."^{viii}

Twenty-year-old guidelines on anything digital these days is akin to insights from the Jurassic period. This is where the McManus charism might stimulate new thinking, fresh theologizing, and even contemporary guidelines for worship in our cybernated world. I can imagine no group better poised to engage in this task than this, his beloved offspring. You specialize in study days, you craft proposals, you draw upon regional diversities in the service of the church in this country. Should you also be in the vanguard of thinking about how we lay a new ecclesial cornerstone in the digital heavens as we reach out to those untold numbers of digital worshippers? Where are the blessings that not only pave the way to new construction sites but further help us to approach the living rooms of believers as holy ground? We use incense and music to sanctify our worship; analogously, how do we help the physically distanced to sanctify their own spaces: a studio apartment now a sanctuary, a kitchen table or computer stand now a make-shift altar, a set of speakers now a choir loft? We have *praenotanda* that speaks about churches as dignified, evincing a noble beauty, standing as a symbol of heavenly things (II:3): how do we invite the rich and poor, those who dwell in lavish homes and those crammed into overcrowded apartments to render their domestic sanctuaries a place of holiness and beauty? Our consecrated spaces are sometimes adored with sacred relics, especially those of the martyrs (II:5): how do we enliven the imaginations of our live-stream congregants to beckon the relics of deceased relatives, the artifacts of past baptism or first communions or even recognized rings once blessed at a long ago wedding as living sacramentals of sacrifice and grace, of dying and rising? Dedicating our churches requires that we mark them with the living waters we call holy, and slather them with the chrism that traditions from the East remind us is the very abiding of God's relentless spirit. How do we craft an entrance rite into virtual participation that enables the faithful in their dens and trailer homes, cabins and condos to enact a new *asperges*, helping them distinguish between tuning into the nightly news and entering into a holy encounter?

Abraham Heschel, in his still soul-stirring classic *Sabbath*, created an architecture of holiness that occurred not in space but in time.^{ix} He writes that Sabbaths are our great cathedrals, the Jewish equivalent of sacred architecture. He intuits that while the mythical mind would expect that after heaven and earth had been established, the Eternally Good would create some holy place where a sanctuary must be established, Heschel reads the Hebrew Scriptures as asserting that the first sanctuary is time, Sabbath, which is above all.

There are many imaginary scenarios on the web that ask "If you could go to dinner with any two or three people, whom would you invite?" Pondering this moment, I wanted to invite Abraham Heschel, the physicist Stephen Hawking, and Monsignor McManus. The topic would be: "How does the FDLC plan to tackle worship in a digital age."

I leave you to your own great designs of study days, think tanks, and inter-regional networking to consider how to design or renovate a contemporary church sensitive to and effective in this digitized environment; how to craft directives for how musicians and lectors, presiders and hospitality ministers will evolve into digital ministries in fresh and vibrant ways; and how to guide the live-streaming baptized to distinguish between tuning into reruns of the Simpsons and the holy sacrifice of the Mass. I have every hope that you will lead us again as you have led us before. Every blessing on the journey, undoubtedly graced by the enduring charism of Monsignor Fred. I thank you for this honor from the bottom of my heart. ■

ABOUT THE McMANUS AWARD AND THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT

The delegates to the 1994 National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions in Saint Louis were responsible for the establishment of a national award which would recognize "an individual who or organization which has made significant contributions to furthering the liturgical renewal in the United

States.” In January 1995, the Board of Directors voted to name the award after Monsignor Frederick R. McManus and to designate him as its first recipient.

Msgr. McManus (1923-2005) served as a peritus at the Second Vatican Council and drafted significant portions of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. He served several terms as the President of the Liturgical Conference, and served on the Advisory Council of ICEL. As the Executive Director of the BCL Secretariat, he was instrumental in establishing the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. He served as the Dean of the School of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America and was a leader in promoting dialogue with Orthodox Christians.

Edward Foley, Capuchin is a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order. He also serves his Capuchin community as the Vice-Postulator for the canonization cause for Blessed Solanus Casey.

Father Foley is recently retired from Chicago’s Catholic Theological Union where he served as the Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality, as a Professor of Liturgy and Music, and as the founding director of the Ecumenical Doctor of Ministry Program. He holds an MDiv from St. Francis School of Pastoral Ministry (Milwaukee), an MM from the University of Wisconsin, and an MA and PhD from the University of Notre Dame.

A prolific and award-winning author, his publications appear in nine languages. Father Foley has been honored with lifetime achievement awards from national and international organizations. He was the founder of “We Believe” a grass roots effort to champion the liturgical renewal. He has lectured in over sixty Roman Catholic dioceses around the world. Besides exercising practical theology as an educator, he preaches and presides at Old St. Patrick’s Church in Chicago.

ⁱ Frederick R. McManus, “Far from Turning Back,” *Pastoral Music* 29:1 (2004) 45-47, here 47.

ⁱⁱ Old St. Patrick’s Church. Online at <https://livestream.com/oldstpats/events/4667723>

ⁱⁱⁱ Old St. Patrick’s Church, online at <https://livestream.com/oldstpats/events/9038563>.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v Bridget Griffen-Foley, “Radio Ministries: Religion on Australian Commercial Radio from the 1920s to the 1960s,” *Journey of Religious History* 32:1 (2008) 31-53, here 34.

^{vi} Karl Rahner, “Die Messe und das Fernsehen,” *Orientierung* 7 (1953) 179-83, here 182-183.

^{vii} Ryan McDonald, “COVID-19: As churches close, many turn to ‘Mass for shut-ins’ service.” Online at [COVID-19: As churches close, many turn to 'Mass for shut-ins' service | CTV News](https://www.ctvnews.ca/covid-19-as-churches-close-many-turn-to-mass-for-shut-ins-service-1.5244444).

^{viii} USCCB. “Guidelines for Televised Mass.” Online at <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions/guidelines-for-televising-the-liturgy>.

^{ix} Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951).