

TAPE  
P150 - Doss  
(RNK)

REGINA COELI

You may have heard, or read in the papers some days ago, about Pope Paul's announcement, during the ceremony of creating 35 new cardinals, concerning some further changes in the Church's prayer. One is the publication of a new calendar for the Church year. The details of this will probably be made public today in Rome and sent to every diocese in the world so that each diocese will have time to prepare its own local edition before the coming Advent. But some features of it are already known, and I've been commenting on them, in passing, in this programme and on 'Words: Music' for some time past. For, the calendar is closely associated with the new arrangement of Scripture readings at Sunday Mass which we have in fact already begun to use this year, experimentally, in Hong Kong. It's my intention to continue, in these second Catholic midday-prayer programmes each week, to introduce the coming Sunday's scripture readings, so that we can be a little better prepared for the Sunday liturgy and begin, in prayer, to understand the word of God addressed to us at different times and seasons of the year, following the particular celebrations we keep and united with the intention of the Church as she speaks God's word to us. Another of the publications announced by Pope Paul this week is of the new revised prayer book for the Church. This, in case you're puzzled or expecting a new simple daily missal, evidently refers to the Divine Office as it's called - the prayer that monks and priests and many religious are bound to recite daily. This revision has taken longer than at first expected - one reason being that an attempt was being made to make the office a form of prayer more easily

accessible and acceptable to all Catholics, not just for those who at present have an obligation to the divine office, what St Benedict called the Opus Dei, the work of God. When you think of it, it is a rather odd conception that the official daily prayer of the Church should be said by a small minority of the faithful only and that its form should be very much patterned on monastic life. It should surely be, in some way, suitable for all who, apart from their private personal prayer, want to or by their position in the Church ought to pray daily in communion with the whole Church at prayer. The new office, or prayer book, will be much more flexible, while keeping to two principles which have been preserved since the very beginning of Christianity - prayer sanctifying the times of the day, notably morning and evening, and prayer based on the Psalms and scripture; only, in future, the psalms are to be taken at a more leisurely pace, spread over a month rather than crowding them all into one week. Of course there are going to be dissatisfactions with these latest changes; their object, though, is to give greater depth and direction to our Christian celebrations throughout the year, centering them more firmly on Easter, to open the scriptures more widely to all of us, and to help and encourage our community prayer as members of the one Church of Christ. Let's determine now, in prayer, to accept them with interest and eagerness to have them achieve their object in each of us. Before our formal prayers today, an Easter violet - "This is the day the Lord has made: let us rejoice & be glad, Alleluia"

Mass Dies  
- Byrd  
(Byrd's  
Contemp.)

MUSIC  
PRAYERS



There's only time for brief comment on the readings in next Sunday's liturgy. I don't think one should expect to find any clear thematic link between the 3 of them, except of course the general Easter content. For the gospel is from St John (as it will be each Sunday from now to Pentecost), from those chapters preceding his narration of the Passion which are known sometimes as the Discourse at the Last Supper. There's a very old tradition of reading from St John in Eastertide, which has been kept; for, difficult as some of those passages may be, they are the mature reflections of the closest friend of Xt on His dying and glorification and the meaning of it. Sunday's extract is Jesus' telling His apostles of His return to the Father so that they can be with Him too; and His answer to their puzzlement and questions, that He himself, whom they knew and saw and whom we meet and know in faith, is the image of the Father: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me". He is the only way by which men can come to the Father, even if they don't consciously recognize Him: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". The Way, because it's He who reveals the Father; the Truth, because it's He who teaches and makes incarnate the only religion and worship acceptable to the Father, that of the spirit; the Life, because eternal life is to recognize, to know the Father present in the Son. / The other readings on Sunday are from the semi-continuous extracts being taken, in this Easter season, from the Acts of the Apostles (describing the first Christian community at work and prayer — this week, on the choosing of the first deacons), and from the 1<sup>st</sup> letter of St Peter which is a kind of handy on the meaning and demands of Christian life which has its origin and basis in the Paschal Mystery we're celebrating at this time. There's plenty there to meditate & pray about.