

Heroic Christianity Urged

Scriptures Get 'Rock' Interpretation

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IT WAS billed as a Sunday evening rock service.

But its pulling power for the "now" generation was demonstrated by the fact that the unorthodox religious service attracted 300 to 400 young persons Sunday night in the gymnasium of St. William's Catholic Church.

There was a sprinkling in the audience of persons over 30 years but mostly it was a service organized for and participated in by teenagers. Twenty years ago such rites, under church auspices, would have been considered unthinkable.

Entitled "Ode to Mankind," the service consisted of amplified rock music, a prayer, original readings, scriptural readings, a "sharing of the bread" rite and a jam session.

The audience was encouraged to dance during the jam session and dance they did.

The service was conceived by Sigmund Snopek III, 18, of 927 Aurora St., a freshman at the University of Wis-

consin-Waukesha and the son of the Third ward alderman, Sigmund Snopek Jr.

The junior Snopek composed the music and the text, organized and led the rock musicians, played the piano and did much of the singing. He also "sold" the parish's young associate pastor, Fr. Dean Marek, on the idea of holding a service for young persons in a contemporary setting.

Father Marek, sitting on a high stool in front of the audience, offered prayer and read appropriate passages from Old Testament prophets, Jeremiah and Isaiah and from St. Luke.

In the most symbolic part of the service, loaves of bread were brought to the table at the front of the room. The loaves were broken up and passed around the audience, signifying "our unity in flesh, spirit and hope."

During the jam session, photographs selected by Father Marek were flashed on a screen. They showed women and children war victims, injured soldiers, bloodied demonstrators, starving Biafran children and rioting in ghettos.

The impact of these photos on the viewer was probably what Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman had in mind when he entitled his latest movie, "Shame."

Perhaps the catchiest song in the service — from the standpoint of words and music — was "The Train."

It goes in part:

"The train is Jesus Christ, the Son,
It's your mind he hasn't won,
That's why you jump back in fear,
Always hoping for another year.

Snopek and his musicians play contemporary or progressive rock, which shows the influence of classical and baroque styles of composition. For persons over 30, the music is too loud, but for the "with it" generation the music sounded just right. Incidentally, the leader proves himself to be a good piano player in his own right.

Other musicians appearing in "Ode to Mankind" — all recruited from local rock groups — were Bruce Riddiough, lead guitar; Mike Dujardin, bass guitar; Phil Shields, saxophone; Bob Mueller, drums and Dave Waehner, organ.



(Freeman Staff Photo)

Fr. Dean Marek of St. William's Catholic Church, Waukesha, reads from part of a "rock service" composed by Sigmund Snopek III (right, at piano), 927 Aurora St.; Mike Dujardin (left), 1301 Garfield Ave.,

on bass guitar and Bob Mueller, 151 W. Newhall Ave., on drums. The service was entitled "Ode to Mankind" and urged participation by the audience.