

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING *by S. Casarotto, cs* 2/1/09

JEAN GUITTON

In 1962 Jean Guitton was the only layperson called by John XXIII to participate at the Vatican Council. Upon the pope's invitation Guitton spoke during the session on ecumenism. At the closing ceremony on December 8, 1965, the Pope entrusted to French philosopher the message to the world of science.

In the first of three conferences which Guitton gave in Brescia, Italy, in the spring of 1965 (I was privileged in attending them), Guitton focused on "the problems which are the center of all problems,... the problems we always refer to but about which we seldom talk." He listed the following:

1. *The existence of God.* "This is the fundamental issue, on which people today are divided. This acknowledgement of the existence of God goes before and beyond any expression of cultural faith."
2. *Jesus Christ.* "Is He a legend, a myth or did He really exist? Who was he? A man? God? The Revealer?"
3. *The Catholic Church.* "Is the Church continuing in a real, authentic manner the thought and the mission of Jesus or is the Church foreign to Him?"

Jean Guitton was convinced that these three thoughts are not only fundamental but are also inter-related. He also observed that the majority of people (including the "believers") build their life as if these issues were a "given", taken for granted, but never internalized and personalized. In fact many Christians never answer the direct question Jesus asked Peter and the Apostles, "And you, whom do you say I am?" It is not by chance that, in calling the Bishops to the Ecumenical Council Vatican II, John XXIII asked them to focus their deliberations on the fundamental question: "What is the Church to the world, today? What does the Church have to say about herself?" The answer was clear in the document, *Lumen Gentium*: Like Christ, the Church is, and must be, the light to the nations.

ITE MISSA EST

Historians and liturgists have long disputed about the origin and meaning of this form of dismissal of the congregation after Roman mass. The most plausible opinion interprets the expression "Ite missa est" as "Time to be dismissed" or "Time for a mission." The word "missa" eventually came to indicate the mass itself or, as Eastern Churches call it, the Divine Liturgy. For clarity, some options have recently been added to the old formula: "Ite ad Evangelium Domini annuntiandum" (Go and announce the Gospel); "Ite in pace, glorificando vita vestra Dominum" (Go in peace and glorify the Lord with your life); and "Ite in pace" (Go in peace). It is always a good thing to understand what we pray and live it.