



# **Cultivating Soil and Soul: Twentieth-Century Catholic Agrarians Embrace the Liturgical Movement (Pueblo Books)**

*Michael Woods SJ*

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Even before Vatican Council II, individuals like Virgil Michel and Catholic social movements like the National Catholic Rural Life Conference attempted to promote greater social justice by reconnecting rural life in the United States with the liturgical life of the church. Efforts to remedy this dislocation between agrarian life and church liturgy meshed the liturgical year with the rural agricultural cycle. The introduction of devotions, sacramentals, ritual, music, dance, poetry, and dramatic performances helped farmers rediscover the sacramental character of the soil and all the elements of agrarian life that emerge from it. Those interested in issues of social justice, sacramental engagement, and even the development of the vernacular in the liturgy will explore these and other topics in this unique archival investigation.

*Michael Woods, SJ, STD, is assistant professor of religious studies at Gonzaga University, teaching liturgical and sacramental theology. His interests focus on the relationship between liturgy and life, especially as they pertain to ecological sustainability. He is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

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