An ardent defender of active participation and the vernacular in the liturgy, Godfrey Diekmann sought to expand the horizons of believers through his work as classroom professor, retreat master, and editor of Collegeville’s *Orate Fratres* (later renamed *Worship*). Great in stature, Diekmann inspired others by his sheer presence and keen gift for synthesizing theology.

He entered the novitiate at age seventeen and matured rapidly at the Benedictine St. John’s Abbey of Collegeville. At St. John’s, he was given the religious name Godfrey, meaning “the peace of God.” Early on in his formation, Godfrey was influenced by the work of Virgil Michel, OSB. At the very time Michel was establishing Collegeville’s name as a center of liturgical renewal, the newly professed Godfrey went to Rome to train for the priesthood and to study for a doctorate in theology. He professed his solemn vows on July 11, 1929, at Monte Cassino on the 1,400th anniversary of its founding by St. Benedict.

Diekmann was ordained on June 28, 1931, completed his dissertation, and returned to Collegeville to teach high school, assist in formation, and apprentice under Michel. He soon took up teaching on the college level and quickly became known for his enthusiastic and animated teaching style.

While Diekmann’s reputation in the classroom developed, so too did the demand on his time for other noteworthy projects. Perhaps most significant of these was his appointment in the fall of 1933 as the assistant editor of *Orate Fratres*. Five years later, Diekmann took over as editor after Michel’s sudden death and remained in that position for more than twenty-five years. In this post, Diekmann would steer the journal toward the horizon of the Second Vatican Council, aiding in conveying to an international audience the uniquely U.S. perspective on the Liturgical Movement.

Diekmann lectured at many of the National Liturgical Weeks and Notre Dame’s summer liturgy sessions and was a visiting professor at The Catholic University of America (CUA). His voice was recognized as lending support to the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, especially in the Liturgy of the Hours. When Diekmann was appointed in 1960 as a consultant to the liturgy commission preparing the agenda for the Second Vatican Council, he was named secretary of the subcommittee charged with the subject of the cultural adaptation of the liturgy (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 37–40).

It was clear that Diekmann represented the view of progressive change with regard to liturgical reform. That led to two major disappointments. First, in 1962, Diekmann was disinherited from his summer teaching assignment at CUA. However, more disappointing for Diekmann was not receiving an invitation to be a peritus at the Council’s first session. Fortunately, that invitation came with the second session.

After the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Diekmann was appointed to the Consilium charged with implementing reform—specifically, he was part of the committee that studied the use of Scripture in the Mass. He became a founder of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

Godfrey Diekmann, a dedicated monk and a beloved teacher, is best remembered as a pastoral “popularizer” of reform. Fred McManus once said of him: “His theological depth is equaled only by his charity. More than anyone else, he bridges the pastoral concerns and the spiritual, theological goals of liturgical change” (cited in Kathleen Hughes, *How Firm a Foundation*, 90). Diekmann retired from teaching in 1995 and died on February 22, 2002.

“For by active and intelligent participation in the sacraments, man is lifted out of his own narrow self-centeredness, to become one with Christ . . . . Every sacrament should make us less earthbound, should, may I say, give us wings. Every sacrament, since it actually confers the seeds of eternal glory, should make us homesick for our eternal home, should lift up our hearts, for we are in fact, and not only in hope, citizens of heaven.”

*(Come, Let Us Worship, 38–39)*