

Father Esser

Following is the text of the eulogy given by Rev. Albert Shamon at the solemn Mass for Rev. E. Joseph Esser at St. Patrick's Church, Victor, Friday, Oct. 12. Father Esser died Monday, Oct. 8, 1962.

"I am the good Shepherd" (Jn. 10:11).

On the roads of Palestine, and on the hills, one can see even in this day the good shepherd. He walks along the road at the head of his flock, and he generally carries over his shoulder a lamb or an injured sheep.

The Palestinian shepherd, however, would be puzzled today by our principle of driving. In English-speaking countries, shepherd and sheep-dog DRIVE the sheep. In the land of Palestine neither the shepherd nor his sheep-dog drive the sheep. Instead, the shepherd always goes before his sheep and leads them, and the sheep follow him; and his sheep-dog is used, not as a driver, but as a watch-dog — to protect the sheep against thieves and wolves.

The function of the Palestinian shepherd is twofold: to lead the sheep to green pastures; then to guard them against wild animals and thieves — to lead and feed them, to protect and guard them.

Not without reason, therefore, did Christ speak of Himself as the good shepherd. Not without reason does the Church call the priest who has charge of souls "shepherd"; for that is all "pastor" means: a shepherd. Like the Palestinian shepherd, the shepherd of souls also has two functions: he is to lead those entrusted to his care to the green pastures of eternal life by feeding them the pabulum of truth (truth, which is the way to life), and to guard them against the wolves and thieves, which are the sins of Satan and the lures of the world.

Christ called Himself, not merely a shepherd, but a good shepherd. "I am the good shepherd." He said. He would not have added the word "good" had there not been bad shepherds. The bad shepherd, he called a "hireling." "But the hireling, who is not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees." St. Paul has described the hireling. In his fervent Epistle to his beloved Philippians, he wrote that he was sending Timothy to them. In almost the same line, he also told them why he had chosen Timothy. "I have no one," he wrote, "so like-minded, who is so genuinely solicitous for you. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 2:2).

The hireling, who is not a good shepherd, is the one who seeks his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. His chief and only concern is for his own temporal advantage, for material gain, for tinsel fame. Therefore when he sees the wolf coming, he flees. The wolf is the devil. He comes when he seeks to lead souls into sin. The hireling flees when he does nothing to save the sinning soul. He sees the wolf snatch a sheep by the throat; the devil entice one to sin — but the hireling holds his peace.

Rebuke is needed, he is silent; pursuit is necessary, he runs away. Why? Because he is afraid. Afraid of what? St. Augustine, commenting on the heading of John the Baptist, remarked that "veritas parit odium — truth begets hatred." The hireling is afraid of the hatred that might follow, the loss of human friendship that might result, the annoyance of enmity that might be incurred; were the needed rebuke to be administered or the necessary pursuit to be made. So he keeps silent. Fear forces him to do so. Fear locks his lips.

And because fear is the flight of the mind in the face of present evil, the hireling is said to flee even though physically present to his sheep — to flee in spirit. He "sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees" when, and because he does nothing to save them.

Not so the good shepherd. "He preaches the word in season and out of season" (whether one likes it or not, for he regards not human respect, nor the whims or wishes or fancied hurts of his listeners); "he reproves, entreats, rebukes with all patience and teaching" (no matter the personal cost to himself). (2 Tim. 4:2).

Were we to hang the threads of Father Esser's life on the peg of a single thought, it would be to call him "a good shepherd." Within two years, he worked at St. Ann's in Hornell, and at old St. Mary's in Rochester. Then he was made a shepherd, a pastor, first of St. James in Trumansburg and then, in 1935, of St. Patrick's here in Victor.

Like the good shepherd, Father Esser never left his sheep here: he knew his own and his own knew him for 26 long years. Like the good shepherd, he led his flock by his burning pulpits into the verdant pastures of truth. Like the good shepherd, he fed his flock — both young and old, strong and weak, sick and dying — with the Bread that makes men strong and the Wine that germinates virgins. Like the good shepherd, he guarded and guided his flock by his priestly counsels and admonitions in the confessional and in the classroom.

He was no hireling; when ever evil threatened his flock,

he spoke out fearlessly, strongly, and inflexibly, even when speaking out meant at times loss of peace and friendship to himself. He was no hireling; whenever he thought a principle or a deep-seated conviction was at stake, he never gave ground no matter the price. He was no hireling; for he gave his life to the service of his flock.

Though our hearts go out today in deep sympathy to his dear sister, Ann, who in the last, long, lingering months of his sickness nursed her priestly brother so lovingly and tenderly; though our hearts go out in deep sympathy to his nephews and nieces, who always stood ready to do what they could for their priestly uncle; though our hearts go out in deep sympathy to all his other relatives and friends; yet we do rejoice that Father's end was as beautiful as his life. To the end he was conscious. My last privileged act for him was to hold the crucifix to his parched lips. Though the sands of his life were fast running out and his strength fast ebbing away, he managed to muster energy enough to purse those lips and kiss his crucified Shepherd, whose call he heard even at the very end.

For many, many years, Father Esser, like the Good Shepherd, led others into the green pastures of heaven, where he will want for nothing.

May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Educators Share Common Goals

Columbus — (NC) — The Ohio Board of Education president said here differences and conflicts between Catholic and public education have been magnified out of proportion.

Wayne E. Shaffer, the board head, told a standing-room-only crowd of parents, Sisters and lay teachers at St. Mary of the Springs College that those who are interested in the education of America's children should emphasize the great areas of "common beliefs, common problems and common goals."

The principals and teachers of the Diocese of Columbus held their annual meeting (Aug. 29 and 30) at the college.

SHAFER SAID educators often asked why schools — or teachers — aren't as good as they used to be. He noted the "golden age of education" is always the time when the person asking the question was in school. This attitude has always been a fact of life for teachers and "the hardships of one generation always become the lost virtues of the next," he said.

Among the major problems facing educators, Shaffer mentioned: — The need for new courses. "The pool of human knowledge has doubled in the last 15 years, and will probably double in the next."

— Dropouts. "Only 69 percent of those who start school in Ohio graduate from high school."

— Attracting more teachers. "Pay is not the whole answer, but teachers still make less than plumbers."

Monsignor Hallak

Following is the text of the eulogy given by Rev. James Sarkis at the Divine Liturgy (Mass) for Rt. Rev. Msgr. Andrew Hallak at St. Nicholas Church, Rochester, Saturday, Oct. 13. Monsignor Hallak died Tuesday, Oct. 9, 1962.

Behold O Lord I come to do thy will.

The Right Reverend Archmandrite, Msgr. Andrew Hallak, fifty years a priest; member of the Basilian Choeurite Order; pastor of St. Nicholas Church for 17 years; pastor of St. George's Church Birmingham Alabama for 14 years; relief pastor in Toledo, Ohio for 3 months; server of two missions to the dioceses of Pittsburgh and Altoona; relief pastor of Holy Savior Parish in Montreal, Canada for 6 months; pastor of Dubois, Pa. for 10 years; assistant priest at the parish churches of St. Michael, Barbara, and the Assumption, cathedral church in Zhalé, Lebanon and teacher of French and Arabic in the Oriental College of Zhalé for eight years; Secretary to Flavians Kfoury, Archbishop of Homs, Hama, and Yabroud for two years; ordained priest of Jesus Christ in 1912; seminarian in the monastery of St. John the Baptist in Khent, Lebanon for six years; Jesuit trained in Yabroud, Syria for 9 years; a child of God, born in an instant of time on April 8, 1888 in Yabroud, Syria; created by God; conceived in the mind of God from all eternity — is dead.

Christ is risen from the dead and by His death He has crushed death and given life to those in the tombs. Let us picture now the dialogue that I feel confident is going on now between the soul of the priest and His Brother Priest Christ.

This day you will be with me in paradise. Fear not good and faithful servant. I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me and keeps my commandments shall live forever. You are dead as to your body, but alive as to Me. Come enter into a banquet feast prepared for all who believe in Me. Indeed as all men you have sinned in your life — no man living is without sin. But your heart is broken, humble, and contrite and I will not and cannot despise it.

You have done your work which I laid out for you. I called you from all eternity to serve Me. Some I call in one way, others in another. You I chose to carry on my work as my brother priest. This you have done. Through you I washed the sin of your first parents from the souls of all that you baptised into Me. Through you I strengthened the weaknesses of those that you confirmed into Me. Through you I fed the hungry with the Bread of Life — which I am. Through you I blessed, fortified, and united man and woman in Matrimony. Through you I washed clean again the sins of my people in the confessional. Through you I strengthened and fortified the sick and the dying with extreme unction. Through you I preached my kingdom. Through you were souls converted to Me. Through you I counseled the doubtful. Yes, through you I saved souls and brought them to My bosom in my heavenly home.

As I, you were firm with the arrogant and proud. As I, you were kind and compassionate to the humble and repentant. As I, you hated iniquity and injustice. As I, you loved righteousness and justice.

You prayed daily as I. You offered yourself as victim as I. You loved children as I. You

Korea Honors Missioner

Seoul — (RNS) — A Maryland missionary who has worked with leprosy patients for nearly 30 years — 20 of them in China — has been awarded the Order of Cultural Merit National Medal by Korean President Chung Hee Park.

The citation was presented here to Father Joseph A. Sweeney, M.M., a native of New Britain, Conn., in recognition of his long service in the field of leprosy.

Brazil Sends Delegate

Rio De Janeiro — (RNS) — Brazilian Foreign Minister Afonso Arinos will head this country's official delegation to the opening of the Second Vatican Council in October, it was announced here.

Brazil's decision to be officially represented at the opening of the Council was prompted by the government's desire to express its support of Pope John XXIII in calling the concave. Brazil is the world's largest Catholic country.

Big Gain In Congo Paper

Dublin — (RNS) — A French priest who started the first Catholic newspaper to be published in former French Equatorial Africa reported, while on holiday here, that his publication has shown a 400 per cent circulation gain in three years.

Father Jean Le Gall started the paper in 1952, carrying both international and local news. It now has a circulation of 10,000 and is read in the country's four provinces. In 1959, before the country attained independence, the circulation was 2,000.



Safety Reminder for Students

SAFETY POSTERS and identification cards were distributed throughout area schools this week through the cooperation of the Police Safety Bureau and Dairylea Dairy. Shown at St. Stanislaus School are Joseph McAuliffe and Cheryl Doell, second graders; Miss Genevieve Gardner, second grade teacher, and Sgt. Thomas Hastings, safety education officer.

Bishop Walsh Still Alive

Denver — (NC) — Still cheerful after nearly four years in a Red Chinese prison, Bishop James E. Walsh, M.M., writes repeatedly: "Thank those who pray for me and ask them to continue."

This was the report of Bishop Walsh's sister, Sister M. Rosalia, a member of the Mission Servants of the Sacred Heart, who stopped here on her way to her convent in Brooklyn, N.Y., after a series of talks on the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Pueblo, Colo.

Bishop Walsh's imprisonment was recently featured on a nationally televised drama. The Bishop's letters to his family are always cheerful and contented. Sister Rosalia said, "He is allowed to send us one letter a month."

"He can't tell us very much. But the letters are in his handwriting and so we know that he is still alive and seems to be happy despite his imprisonment."

Bishop Walsh, 71, was arrested in October, 1958, and sentenced in 1960 by the Red Chinese courts to 20 years in prison for alleged "espionage" against the Communist regime.

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