

Is Salvation of the Cosmos Dependent on Man?

THEOLOGY OF SPACE
(Sixth in Series)

By **BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN**

No one can deny that man, whatever he is, is not what he ought to be. We have our feet in the mud, our dreams in the sky. A civil war is being waged inside us, between what we know we are and what we ought to be.

The cosmos is like us, for it is not perfect either. If man and his earth had a fall, so also did the celestial orbs; cogs slip, gears do not mesh, either in the heart or in space. Enough order is found to argue to a mind, but enough disorder, from common colds to errant meteors, to argue that someone has thrown a monkey wrench into the machinery. The abuse of freedom would account for this want of perfection both in man and in the skies. Intelligences far superior to man must have disordered the cosmos, as the intelligence of man disordered both his heart and his earth.

Who Reorders Space?

We know how man is restored to order, namely, through the redemptive blood of Christ, but who redeems the universe? Shall the Pleiades have no Christ to walk their whirling spheres?

Even the Greeks knew there was disorder in the heavens and they explained it this way. Jupiter, the first of the gods was not a faithful husband. To make his natural son Hercules immortal, he put the child at the breast of his wife, Juno, while she slept. Awakened, she hurled the illegitimate son from her, and her milk spilled across the sky. The result was the Milky Way which had its origin in anti-love, anti-creation or anti-order.

Is Salvation of the Cosmos Dependent on Man?

So the question remains: If man is redeemed through Christ Who came in the "fullness of time, who is the savior of Space? Is it man, but man reintegrated and matured by Christ. Man is remade directly, but space will be re-made indirectly through man. First you build the house, then you plant the lawns and the garden; first you restore the sick child to health, then you fix his toys.

If the earth and the universe were made for man, does it not follow that you first restore the spoiled portrait, then you care for the frame? Who is best fitted to sit for the restoration of a portrait, if it be not him who originally posed for it? Since man was made "conformable to the image of the Son," does it not follow that the Son should descend to the studio of earth to reveal man to himself? "The second Man came from heaven and was the Lord Himself. . . . We shall be made like the Heavenly patterns" (1 Cor. 15/48, 50)

Christ walking the earth became the model of the way man once was, and as he can begin to be anew. Now since the earth and space were the frame of that Heavenly Portrait, it follows that they, too, will be re-made for the restored man.

Suppose now we shift our emphasis to Space, and into how much its renewal and agglornamento depends on man.

The Groaning of the Cosmos

If a clock with a broken mainspring was endowed with consciousness, would it not want to be repaired in order to keep time for man? If some cosmic disaster happened to the planets, through the rebellion of intelligences charged with their orderly beauty, would they not want to be renewed and restored to pristine elegance?

A rose, if it were conscious, might want to be a messenger to a lover, or else lean its crimson head on the Eucharistic Lord. Gold, in the bowels of the earth, might aspire to be a chalice; a tree might yearn to be a crucifix; and the most distant stars might want to shed their light on man, the most intelligent creature on the earth. Since they were made for man, they presumably would like to serve Him. "Everything belongs to you; You belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God." (1 Cor. 3/21) That is the hierarchy of Time and Space.

Disorder on Earth

But we know that everything does not work out that way. Some demonic force seems to have power over the entire cosmos; there are, what Paul calls "principalities and powers" mentioned in Colossians and Ephesians.

Just limiting ourselves to earth for a moment, did not our Lord, during a storm on the Sea of Galilee, "rebuke the winds and seas"? The storm was evidently a very violent one, even to those fishermen hardened to the violence of the sea; for it was called, in the Gospel, a seismos (the word for earthquake). Why does one rebuke anyone if it is not because there has been disorder and disobedience? Even these elemental earthly forces of winds and seas seem to be under a power, or have within them an urge to disorder. The frightened disciples aroused the Lord Who was calmly asleep during the storm. He "spoke sternly to the wind, and said to the sea: 'Be silent! Be muzzled!' . . . And there was a great calm."

No wonder the fishermen, who only a few moments before called Him "Teacher," were so amazed, not knowing that He was the Lord not only of the waters and the breezes of the Galilean hills, but also of the starry spaces of the universe. "Who then can this be because the wind and the sea obey Him?"

Why Did Not Christ Redeem Space?

When Christ came to this earth He was not concerned about restoring the chaos in the cosmos, but only about restoring the chaos in man. Only in a few instances does He display His Lordship over the astronomical and the cosmic. Why not? Because the universe was made for man, not man for the universe. The earth we know produced thorns, animals became wild, and the soil reluctantly gave fruit in response to the sweat of

brov. The servant-earth rioted against man when man rioted against God.

One wonders if the innate suspicion, or fear animals have against man, is not their way of saying: "We cannot trust you, for our God could not." Man can do bird watching, but when the bird sees him, it flies not to his hand but away from it.

Returning now to Outer Space, it is in a chaotic state like the earth. But the fatted calf of a new heaven and a new earth will not be served until Prodigal Man is safe again in the Father's House. Earth and space are not redeemed now because the redemption of man is not complete.

Why Not Pantheism?

God became man, but He did not become all things. It might seem that God, instead of being enfleshed, should also have put His Divinity into every tree and star, every thistle and comet, every animal and every atom. This would have been Pantheism, or God in all things. But this was contrary to His Plan; creation is for man, man is for Christ, Christ is for God. So He starts with man, and man in his turn is to bring back as much creation as is possible to himself. This is done in many ways: by eating and by seeing and by hearing, man absorbs some of the earth into himself, restores it to himself, makes it serve him. By his science and his art, man gets the cosmos into his head; he who understands anything, gives it a new kind of being or existence. Never before in history has man so fulfilled the Divine command: "rule over the earth and subject it."

Despite all the expense of traveling to the moon and exploring space, there is something divine about these endeavors. We are bringing errant and rebellious creation into subjection; we are tearing open the secrets God locked in molecules, cells and galaxies; we are "spiritualizing" the cosmos, "sacramentalizing" it, as we do with water when we make it, in baptism, serve the cleansing of the soul.

Ninety percent of all the scientists who ever lived are alive today, and what we are mastering now is as child's play to what we will master tomorrow. The cosmos is ours. God meant it to be that way. All thanks, therefore, to scientists, astronomers, astrophysicists, and bio-chemists who are "humanizing" the cosmos, so that we lesser minds may say of them: "Who are they that the winds and seas obey them?" The Magi have come back — the stars are leading them to the mastery of the universe. As the Lord "rebuked" winds and seas, so man is detaching order from chaos, darkness from light, and gaining mastery over what St. Paul calls "the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens." (Eph. 6/12)

Man Must First Master the Cosmos

Before Christ comes again to glorify the new humanity, the cosmos must first be mastered by man. Science is an essential part of the whole drama of Redemption: It prepares for the triumphal march of man at the end of time. Not every man wants to be Christ's but every atom wants to be man's. More unconscious yearnings heave in the breast of the cosmos for the restoration to God, than there are conscious yearnings in the heart of man to "share in the cross in order to partake of the glory of His Resurrection."

Space Is "Sad"

That brings us back to what we said at the beginning, namely, that Space is "sad" because man rebelled; it can hardly wait for the mainspring of the universe to be made whole again, so that it may be made whole.

This staggering truth is found in Paul's letter to the Romans: "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own" (Rom. 8/19) Earnest expectation throbs in the seas, the earth, the asteroids, the moons of Jupiter and all outer space as they long for their release from chaos. The "universe is groaning," even as we groan because we are weak and fallen. One almost feels that Nature and the Cosmos are compelled to do many things they would not do, if man had not seduced and prostituted them. The atmosphere carries messages which make it "blush" as food so often serves man for dishonest deeds.

The Cosmos Is Expectant

The cosmos, too, is waiting for better days. If God should open the mouth of the galaxies, as He did to Balaam's ass, they would groan under their servitude. "The world of creation cannot as yet see its future glory, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purposes it has been so limited" (Rom. 8/20) The mansion of the cosmos has been stained by the leprosy of him that dwells in it. Once man is delivered from the "bondage of corruption," then the wonderful, beautiful cosmos, presently standing on tiptoe in hope, will reach its consummation in the resurrection of man.

What was Darwin talking about in his "struggle for existence," but the groaning and yearning of creation "in pain until now," and the hope that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God. It is plain to anyone with eyes, that at the present time "all created life groans in a sort of universal travail" (Rom. 8/21).

Both man and the cosmos are in the chrysalis state. Everything is tending to what Teilhard de Chardin has called the Omega Point. Until then all creatures are sensible not only of their own bondage, but also of the bondage to each other and of us to ourselves. (Hosea 2/21) The heavens hear the groans of earth, and the earth hears the complaint of corn, and wine, and the misery of men. That is why the sun was darkened, out of sympathy, at the passion of Christ (Joel 1/78).

(Continued on Page 15)

LETTERS to the editor



No Perfect Answer

Editor:
The approach of Lent brings up the question of what is a good devotion or practice to best express our Christianity. There is no perfect answer.

However, in an effort to aid people to find a meaningful and advantageous practice that will help bring the individual and community to a greater knowledge and love of Christ, the Diocesan Adult Theology Program will offer an expanded program of courses throughout the diocese.

They seek to offer the adult an opportunity to take a more effective role in the world he lives in by providing him with a variety of classes on the important religious questions of the day.

Many of the laity are confused by the rapid changes taking place in Catholicism. Some react by holding on to everything they were once taught, others too eagerly embrace all that is new. Some seek to bring about a harmonious change in their religious life based upon a well balanced understanding of the whole post-Vatican II religious world.

The courses being offered this Lent are designed to help all these people. The treatment of the topics will include explanations of changes taking place, and the possible future changes. Discussions permit the individual to arrive at the particular applications to be made in his own life and in his own community.

This program does not pretend to work miracles. It cannot give answers where there are none. It cannot provide viewpoints that all will agree with. It cannot eliminate the tensions and conflicts that are so much a part of our time. But it can help in each of these areas, and provide a foundation for a better participation in all that Christianity means.

—Fr. Leopold, OFM, Cap.
Co-Director, Adult Theology

them to keep their products clean or get out of the neighborhood.

—George Renckerman,
Rochester

'Confused' Speaker

Editor:
Last Thursday evening I sat in amazement in St. John Fisher Auditorium as a certain John Leo, somehow connected with "The New York Times" lashed out again and again at the papacy, the episcopacy, tradition, scripture, the sacraments — almost every facet of Catholicism. This modern renegade brought here by a group calling themselves an "Association of Catholic Laymen" was cashing in like a pusher who cashes in by dope-hooking and victimizing his clientele with his venom.

I forced myself to listen as this brazen and arrogant individual sought cleverly to conceal his deception and attack with the statement, "I am so confused." Pray, tell, would prompt one so confused to get up before a group, many of whom were similarly confused, except that he was seeking that type of cheap notoriety that comes from brick throwing.

Pope Paul is not confused. On Dec. 4, 1968, addressing thousands at his weekly general audience in St. Peter's Basilica in a voice breaking with emotion, the White Shepherd of the Vatican spoke out fearlessly against dissenters in the Roman Catholic Church and demanded obedience to the Church's rules, and reproved those refusing to accept his demands that efforts to teach the Christian message in modern times must reaffirm the traditional view on basic doctrine.

He added: "Accepted doctrine can not be abandoned," and that on this point the Catholic Church would not yield at any cost.

Speaking of the Church's teachings, he said, "On this point the Catholic Church, you know, is severe, is demanding, is jealous, is dignified; otherwise faith disintegrates and with it the very same community that is called the one and only Church."

John Leo, there is no threat of confusion here.

Isn't it strange that today's protesters and dissenters are so unilateral that others' opinions or views are intolerable and completely erroneous? These dissenters are more inflexible than the inflexible Church.

They seek to drive a wedge between the Bishops and the faithful in the name of Vatican II. The Pope and the Bishops are Vatican II. They alone had authority at Vatican II. How contradictory to attack them in the name of Vatican II! What can one expect from Leonine confusion?

—Rev. Edward Shannon
St. Aloysius Church, Auburn

Right to Protest

Editor:
This is a message of appreciation for the column in the 1/31/69 Courier concerning our protest of the "dirty films" being shown in the Thurston Road neighborhood.

I say "our" because I feel all of the people who walked on the picket line and those who have expressed an interest in our cause (numbering hundreds, by the way) need a word of encouragement if we are to see this through.

We are accused of censorship yet, as you say, we have a right as citizens to protest such corruption in our neighborhood.

Mrs. Kathleen Murty,
Arnett Blvd., Rochester

Pornographic Films

Editor:
Your article on neighborhood action against a bad movie (COMMENTARY, 1/31/69) spoke of disappointment that the courts do not always convict a peddler of obscenity because the present laws are so "vague."

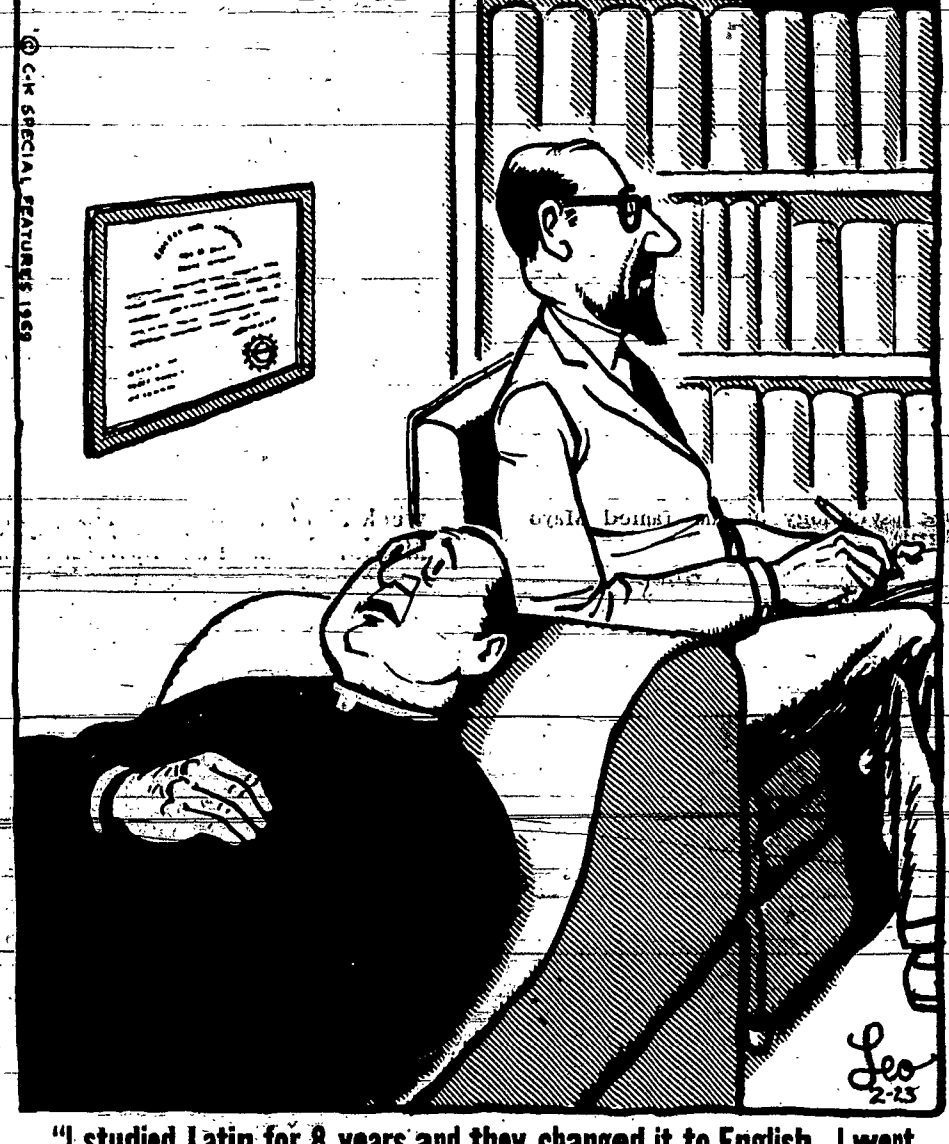
The State Penal Code (section 235) says that printed material or a performance (movie or stage) is to be judged obscene if "considered as a whole its predominant appeal is to prurient, shameful, or morbid interest in nudity, sex, sadism or masochism."

This writing or performance must also be utterly without "redeeming" social value and substantially beyond the limits of candor accepted by the community.

Christians opposed to pornography and movie filth—whether it is liable to be offered to children or not—should urge their state legislators to enact laws more specifically worded to ban obscenity. The laws should spell out precisely what the police may arrest for.

Unless the laws draw a clear line soon explaining what may never be put into print or picture, we shall all see the acceleration of the present crumbling of all standards of decency.

But we must not pass the buck to the men in Albany. We should always refuse our business to stores or theaters that insult our ideals, keep our children carefully away from them, walk picket lines in front of them and call the police to harass



"I studied Latin for 8 years and they changed it to English. I went abroad to master classical church music and they got the guitar. Mass. I've spent a lifetime learning the art of public speaking and they threw out the sermon for dialogue. . . ."

Word for Sunday

Gospels Are Seeds, Not 'Sayings'

By **Father Albert Shamon**

My study is lined with books — hundreds of them. Whenever anyone comes into it, the invariable question is — "Did you read 'all that'?" After browsing about a bit, the second question is — "Will you let me take this book to read?"

Of all the books in my library, there is one I have never been asked to loan: the book of the Gospels.

Imagine if a rich aunt left a last will or testament, perhaps with you as a legatee. Would you read it? Do you pocket a letter from one we love, unread? Yet we are so certain God has left us nothing in His New Testament with its letters of love that we won't even take time to read it.

You know this is going to be rather embarrassing when we stand before the judgment seat of God. When we see God, our one regret will be, "Why didn't I know better? How come priests never told me about you, Lord? What were they doing all the time? Gosh, my life would have been different, had I known."

To which our Lord can reply, "How was it you did not know me? Perhaps some sermons and talks about me had been poor. But I tell you my words and life in the Gospels. How was it you did not read them? Had you no time? Were you too over-worked? Did you consider *Caddy* more important?"

In Sunday's parable, our Lord said the word of God is like a seed. The vitality of a seed! From tiny seeds — so tiny that one ounce of grass pollen contains six billion grains —

rise the fertile fields of wheat that feed the world; the labyrinthine vines that bear the heads of the sweet wine that delights the hearts of men; the towering sequoia that dwarfs the houses hewn from its wood. So God's word — packaged in the tiny book of the Gospels — is vital, able to give life, to save, to change the heart.

But the point of the parable is that the seed needs the soil. The seed needs to be revealed by the soil. Unused, the seed counts for little.

So many times we blame priests, preachers, for not changing the world. You know, our Lord blamed the hearers!

Once a lad said to another, "Go

fly a kite." The other lad replied, "Okay, I will."

"Oh, I'm just kidding."

"I told you, I will." So he started to make a kite.

His friend was perturbed. I didn't really mean it. You know, it's just a saying."

"Not for me," the other answered.

So many never take the Gospels literally. Were they so taken, they would lead to action; yes, maybe others would be disturbed.

But sadly, too often the Gospel words are not seeds but "just sayings" like "go fly a kite." That's the trouble.

ROCHESTER CAN
in another "ham"
talk with priests a
has made it possi
with the oi

Bolivia Tuned

Ham

By ARTHUR P. I
Sit in front of a "ha
in the Rochester area
have a lengthy chat w
serving at the Roche
Mission in La Paz, Bol
5,000 miles away.

This "modern magic
quently in the home of
van, 248 Berkshire Dr.,

Through Sullivan's g
equipment, one of
priests, assigned to the
sion — Father Peter
rently vacationing at
home — talked for 4
hour last Saturday a
Father Paul Freemess

The third priest ser
ther Edward Golden, e
area at the time.

The magic of "ham
on Saturday included
currencies:

• A Rochester, Min
tered the frequency
ester, N.Y., participant
several minutes while
messer talked with his
in Minnesota. Father
messer, CSE, a Basilla
ing psychology at the
Clinic.

• A young Puerto-R
ian in La Paz talked w
in Paterson, N.J. —
radio to Sullivan's rad
via a "patch-in" conn
Sullivan's telephone to
in the Paterson home.

After several minu
mother signed off with
Virgin he with you, my
lation to English by
man.)

Talking with radio
around the world, an
ships at sea, is not
Sullivan. He's been do
first became intereste
the wall is a large "A
Map of the World," do
in countries around th
ing staling with whic
contact.

Sullivan, one of se
members of the Roch
Radio Association (R
censed under "call 1
KBT.

Father Freemesser —
priests got the Courier
lately — was pleased
radio the latest word
tions of Father Nichol
Father James Russell,
covering from effects
tal cartoon moroxide
Anthony of Padua — re

Father Deckman, at
family at 268 Genesee
time since he left for
than two years ago.
Freemesser what he sh
with him when he retu
about Feb. 10.

"Well," was the r
money, would you pl
some cigars?"

Laymen's Me

200

More than 200 perso
talk by New York Cl
man John Leo at St.
College Jan. 30. It was
the recently formed I
society of Catholic I

Admitting that "I a
as you are," Leo deliv
clever-turn-of-phras
Church, the Pope and
Bishops, which seemed
majority of listeners b
ed to disturb and dis

The lively Leo felt, "I
a sense of security in
have not as yet been
lish "a true sense of co
expects it will take "I
before groups like you
away the barnacles"
ish some sort of non-
the culture in America.

Leo said the no large
day. Miss regularly,
couldn't find many
Misses" in his New Y
hood.

COURIER-JOURNAL

NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER SOCIETY

BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN
President

Msgr. John S. Randall Managing Editor
Rev. Richard Tomney Editor
Anthony J. Costello Advertising Director

Carmen J. Vigliucci Associate Editor
Arthur P. Farren Associate Editor

MAIN OFFICE 35 Scoie St. — 654-7893 — Rochester, N. Y. 14604
ELMIRA OFFICE 317 Robinson Bldg., Lake St. — RE 2368 or RE 2303
AUBURN OFFICE 144 E. Geneva St. — AUBURN — AL 2446