

Tooth of the Lion

Scientifically it is known as "taraxacum officinale" and the poetically inclined have always scorned it in favor of such as the "red, red rose."

Chemists, prodded by rampant public opinion, have devoted much work, skill and production to its demise. In a Gallup Poll, it would be lucky to finish and it would fail to raise a chuckle on the Colgate laugh meter.

Armies of men devote boundless energy to ripping it from the public scene.

Maligned, ridiculed, hated, even stepped upon, it has persisted. It is indeed time to take a fresh look at this adversary to understand its nature.

In our part of the world, members of this species paint fields and lawns golden (although men are wont to say yellow) in the embryonic days of spring while their more adulated kin are still sleeping in carefully nurtured beds.

Their family background, far from being prosaic, is tinged with romanticism. Their name comes from the Middle French "dent de lion" which in turn derived from Middle Latin — "dens leonis." Thus, the dandelion, which means "tooth of the lion" because of the serrated quality of its leaf.

So, while down through the centuries men have paid homage to various assorted fickle breeds, some even adopted as national or state symbols and others as spoiled house pets, the dandelion, like the lily of the field, has endured.

After all, a rose is only a rose while a dandelion is a salad, a soup, a heady wine, a formidable adversary, a tireless worker.

And don't forget, children love them.

Ladies and gentlemen, we give you the flower of the year, any year and every year — the dandelion.

—Carmen Viglucci

Christ Is Alive

On the first Pentecost Day an infusion of supernatural courage and conviction drove the Apostles into the streets of Jerusalem to announce a startling new truth: that the philosophy of Christ could bring peace into troubled human hearts.

What made that tiny Christian group credible to the people of their times? Philip Hughes, historian of those first centuries, has written that the world into which the Church was born was beginning to be explicitly aware of the brotherhood of mankind. Religion as a matter of rites duly performed to placate ancient gods or win their favor was changing to show concern for man's anxieties and uncertainties. Society was becoming aware of the endless struggle between man's ideal self and the ceaseless counter-passions of his lower self.

When the first Christians asked: "What can we do to change our times?" they answered themselves quite simply: "Christ must be alive in us."

The needs, of their pagan contemporaries, the emptiness, the hopelessness of their life-goals could not be solved by any scholarly recourse to tradition or the quoting of dogmas and the imposing of laws. The Church had no past to lean on, no record of accomplishment or failure to sustain its role, no continuing divine inspiration in its leaders. Faith, love and hope had to be expressed in the concrete of everyday example by living Christians.

Today a troubled society says: "The Church has been preaching here for 2,000 years — but see the mess we are in. What good has its structure and dogmas and morals done for us?" Paradoxically the Church in the ideal appeals to youth and the poor and the blacks, but in the concrete it turns them off and becomes the object of their criticism.

Can we, like the earliest Christians, make the Church credible by the witness of our individual, daily lives? The people are the Church today as they were when the Christian faith first began to move across the face of the Middle East. For many agitating in despair, only the people can show the Christ of love and justice and hope alive in our times.

—Father Richard Tormey

Letters to the Editor

'Happy Are Peacemakers'

Editor:

When a man views recent events — the invasion of Cambodia and the protests around the country — he calls on all the experiences of his life, including the experience of God. It is because of the gift of God's Spirit that we share in the Church, that we Christians are responsible to bring an added insight to the workings of our government.

The message of the good news that we have heard is that God has united all men under Christ and that we are all sharers in the life of God. When the Apostles experienced this message of the Spirit on Pentecost, their response was to take a stand before the people of their time.

As we continue to share this life of the Spirit, we too are urged by that same Spirit to take a stand before the people of our time.

for so long been a scene of death.

—Mary Rose McCarthy
1657 W. Church St.
Elmira

The message is part of our heritage:

"Choose life, and then you and your descendants will live" (Deut. 30:20) and:

"Happy are the peacemakers; they shall be called God's sons." (Matt. 5:9)

It is urgent at this time that each man respond to his understanding of this message with action that will lead to life. It is imperative that we inform the lawmakers that there are other solutions besides violence and death. We must tell them that we believe that it is their responsibility to end the conflict in Indochina and to establish positive means of reconstruction of this area that has

The Word for Sunday

No Shortcuts To Holiness

By Father Albert Shamon



Out of post-Civil War revivals grew the Holiness Movement (popularly known as Holy Rollers). This Movement stresses Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification. One branch has become known as the Perfectionists (Church of the Nazarene). Another branch has blossomed into the Pentecostals. The Pentecostals believe that the gifts bestowed on the apostles at Pentecost — especially the gift of tongues (glossolaly) — are necessary signs of holiness.

Because there is so much talk about Pentecostals today and because some Catholics seem attracted to the sect, a few observations are in order.

On the surface the Movement with its gift of tongues seems to be of value. Its devotees argue that it renews devotion: run-of-the-mill Christians become enthusiastic in their commitment. It enkindles a new desire and a new ease in prayer. It seeks mystical experiences, a personal knowledge of God: not speaking about Him, but to Him in the depths of the soul. It brings the Holy Spirit out of oblivion. Psychologically, it affords temporary relief from inner tension and conflicts. Such are some of the points in favor of the Movement.

However, it is to be noted that all these effects are not by-products of glossolaly. These can be, and normally are, experienced apart from the gift of tongues.

On the contrary, such a pursuit for extraordinary mystical gifts can be highly dangerous. Banquo warned Macbeth not to listen to the witches of Endor: "But 'tis strange; / And oftentimes, to win us to our harm, / The instruments of darkness tell us truths, / Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's / In deepest consequence." Macbeth spurned the warning; his life ended in tragedy.

Supernatural gifts are graces of God: gifts freely given. To seek to wrest them from God by the intense revivalism and conditioning practiced among Pentecostals can often make one a victim of autohypnosis.

Furthermore, experience or feeling is not the criterion of truth. In studying a candidate for canonization, the Church never measures sanctity by what a mystic has experienced, but by the life lived. LSD or drink can create a sense of euphoria. George Eliot describes how a

sect of revivalists interpreted an epileptic fit of Silas Marner as a visitation of the Spirit. The devil is a past master at manufacturing deceptive experiences. Among the pagans glossolaly was a part of their religious practice. Thus the psalmist said, "All the gods of the Gentiles are demons" (Ps. 95:5). And St. John advised, "Test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1).

Moreover, glossolaly can occasion pride. It is often viewed as the apex of spiritual experience. Those who have it tend to gravitate toward each other and form spiritual cliques — the members of which cannot but feel superior. No pride is so vicious as pride of grace. Pascal characterized the nuns of Port Royal with the damning sentence, "Pure as angels but proud as demons." Saints, far from seeking extraordinary gifts, deem themselves unworthy of the least favor. When the angel Gabriel appeared to the Mother of God, she was afraid, not of the angel, but at his words of praise. She was wary, cautious, because a virgin most prudent.

Finally, glossolaly seeks a shortcut to holiness. As education is the fruit of long, hard years of study, so sanctity is a lifetime endeavor. It is not an overnight affair. "The heights by great men reached and kept / Were not attained by sudden flight. / But they, while their companions slept, / Were toiling upward in the night," (Longfellow, "Ladder of St. Augustine").

The dangers of glossolaly far outweigh any of its purported values. There are no shortcuts to holiness. The only road to it must pass through Calvary — the way of the cross.

Trusteeism Old Idea

Editor:

In reply to Mr. Florack's letter in the Courier-Journal (May 6) concerning the "turning over" of all parishes to elected Boards of Trustees, I can only say that he is acutely unaware of the Church's history in America.

The system of "trusteeism" began in New York City in 1785. A group of "interested" laymen purchased a site for a new church and incorporated it under the title of "Trustees of Roman Catholic Church in the City of New York." The trustees, all of them laymen, soon were not content to administer the Church's mundane business affairs, but maintained among other things that they represented the voice of the people and had the right not only to choose its pastor but to dismiss him at their pleasure, and no ecclesiastical superior, bishop or prefect had any right to interfere. This system soon spread in many different degrees to nearly all the dioceses in America.

In 1882 Pope Pius VII condemned trusteeism for it was bound to result in the formation of many separate and independent Churches.

Perhaps Mr. Florack might reply "but times have changed," and he would be right. Times have changed but people haven't.

—Anthony Acciari
408 Lincoln Road
East Rochester

New Look OK'd For Sisters

Editor:

We are writing in favor of the "new look" for sisters. This we think is great for the fact that SISTERS ARE PEOPLE.

Black and white is no symbol of a sister. Sisters are sisters for what they are and do; not to be stared at if they go out to restaurants or shows.

Paula Trotta
Maria D'Onofrio
St. Augustine's Grade 8

The Mouths Of Babes

Much of the work in government is supposed to be done by people who are trained to be civil serpents.

Such sage sayings have been culled from the work of children in a Detroit grade school and distributed via "The Michigan Catholic" and NC News Service.

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