

Moral Imperative: Welfare Reform

The U.S. Senate will soon debate the most significant social legislation in 40 years. It's called the "Family Assistance Plan", proposed by President Nixon last year and publicly backed this weekend by the nation's three major religious bodies. This is the first time the faiths have had an official get-together to express mutual concern for the suffering of the poor and to demand reform of the nation's welfare program.

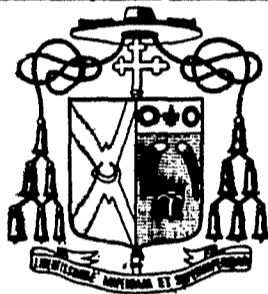
The government says that 25 million people in this affluent land are in bitter poverty — living on less than \$900 a year per person. The new legislation will guarantee to 80 percent of these either a job or an annual income minimum of \$1600 for a family of four. Its coverage will include not only families without work but also, for the first time, the more than 2 million families headed by fulltime workers whose pay is insufficient to meet their basic needs. It intends to lift their income or offer them better jobs, besides furnishing job-training opportunity and child-care centers.

This poverty that makes this multi-billion dollar public assistance program necessary is rooted in a variety of historical and contemporary conditions — inadequate education, poor health, insufficient job opportunities in the locality, discrimination in hiring, low pay in jobs not covered by the minimum wage laws. No cash assistance for the poor can eliminate these underlying causes. It can only deal humanely with the consequences.

But a moral imperative hangs over us to support welfare reform measures which focus strongly on the poverty of the able-bodied poor and their children. This first practical program offering the beginning of economic security to our poorest brothers is every citizen's responsibility.

—Father Richard Torney

Bishop's Appointments For June



- 1—Confirmation — St. Francis of Assisi, Auburn, 7:45 p.m.
- 2—Priests' Council—2 p.m.
- 2—Bishop Sheen Housing Foundation Committee Meeting, 8 p.m.
- 3—Board of Diocesan Consultors, 11 a.m.
- 4—Confirmation — St. Michael's Church, Newark, 7:45 p.m.
- 5—Mass in honor of Sacred Heart of Jesus—Our Lady of Victory Church, 12:10 p.m.
- 5—Confirmation—Sacred Heart Cathedral, 7:45 p.m.
- 7—St. Boniface Church, Mass and Homily, 11:15 p.m.
- 7—Graduation—St. John Fisher College, 3 p.m.
- 8 through 11—Priests' Retreat, Becket Hall
- 13—Graduation—McQuaid Jesuit High School at Eastman Theatre, 8:15 p.m.
- 14—St. Joseph's Church, Rush, Mass, Homily, Communion Breakfast, 10 a.m.
- 14—St. John of Rochester, Perinton, Mass, and Homily 5 p.m.
- 17—Diocesan Administrative Council, 2 p.m.
- 18—Graduation—St. Agnes High School at Eastman Theatre, 8:15 p.m.
- 20—Graduation—Cardinal Mooney High School at Eastman Theatre, 3 p.m.
- 21—Graduation—De Sales High School, Geneva, 3 p.m.
- 23—Graduation—Irondequoit High School at Eastman Theatre, 8:15 p.m.
- 25—Ancient Order of Hibernians—Mass and Homily, St. Mary's Church, Rochester, 9 a.m.
- 26—New York Province of Bishops Meeting in New York City, 9:30 a.m.
- 27—Ordination to the Priesthood—Rev. Charles Lintz, Queen of Peace Church, 11 a.m.
- 27—Ancient Order of Hibernians Banquet, Flagship Hotel, 7:30 p.m.
- 28—St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua, Mass and Homily, 10:15 a.m.

Courier-Journal

Letters to the Editor

Pentecostalism Defended

Editors:

Because of the scores of Catholic laymen, priests and Sisters in the Rochester diocese who have entered the Catholic Pentecostal experience, and who have found it to be a real deepening of their spiritual life in Jesus, I feel the two articles by Father Shamon (C.J. 5/13, 5/20) need to be answered, especially because of the implied condemnation of this experience and these people in his second article.

Father Shamon seems to make light of the gift of tongues, even to the point of ridiculing it. St. Paul says, "While I should like you all to have the gift of tongues, I would much rather you could prophesy..." This is certainly not ridiculing the gift of tongues, which in another place he says is the

least of the gifts. He also states, "I thank God that I have a greater gift of tongues than all of you."

The gift of tongues is a miracle in today's world. It is used by Catholic Pentecostals solely to praise and glorify the Almighty God. It is used in the Catholic Pentecostal movement for this reason, and for this reason only. Therefore, it is strictly biblical.

Father Shamon seems to think that the spiritual benefits that Catholics are deriving from the Catholic Pentecostal movement are a result of speaking in tongues. He couldn't be further from the truth. The benefits, some of which he enumerates in his second article, are direct results not of speaking in tongues but of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which also is biblical.

In St. Mark's Gospel, St. John the Baptist says, "I have baptized you with water, but He (Jesus) will baptize you with

the Holy Spirit." The baptism in the Holy Spirit is what enables Catholic Pentecostals to live an increasingly deep spiritual life hand in hand with Jesus.

Father Shamon says that Catholic Pentecostals are trying to "wrest these gifts from God." Now, let's face it: all gifts, both physical and spiritual, are given freely by Almighty God to whomsoever He pleases. Not one of us has a right to them. But Father Shamon denies us the right to seek after them. He uses Shakespeare as his authority for this.

There is a much better authority. St. Paul in the inspired Word of God says, "Be ambitious for the higher gifts." "Pray all the time, asking for what you need, praying in the Spirit, on every possible occasion." "You must want love more than anything else, but still hope for the spiritual gifts as well, especially prophecy."

The American bishops issued a report on the Catholic Pentecostal movement on Nov. 14, 1969, as given by Bishop Alexander Zaleski, chairman of the bishops' committee investigating the Catholic Pentecostal movement:

"The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church is not the acceptance of the ideology and practices of any denomination, but likes to consider itself a renewal in the spirit of the first Pentecost... The Catholic prayer groups tend to be quiet and reserved... It must be admitted that theologically the movement has legitimate reasons for existence. It has a strong biblical basis."

Catholic Pentecostals believe that they receive nothing new from this movement. Everything they need for salvation is already theirs in the Catholic Church. But they do believe that the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which were given them in Confirmation, should be operative in their lives in a real and even visible way.

By means of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Pentecostal prays for complete openness to the gifts and graces of his Confirmation. A Catholic should grow in his active desire for all of the Holy Spirit's gifts, which the Church teaches are given in Confirmation — even for the gift of speaking in tongues.

—William W. Buechel, Rochester

The Word for Sunday Penance Breaks Sin's Grip

By Father Albert Shamon



The first reading for next Sunday is from Genesis—God's judgment on the serpent and sin. There has been much talk about the Adam and Eve story—in fact, about the entire first eleven chapters of Genesis. And yet the purpose of these chapters is very clear.

Genesis means origins. Three of its first eleven chapters tell of the origin of the world, of man, and of sin; the remaining eight portray the cosmic dimensions of sin. Scripture is called salvation history. But these eleven chapters tell why salvation was necessary. They tell what sin is; how it abounded and got a viselike stranglehold on the human race that no man could break. Somebody had to come strong enough to take on Satan himself, as in Sunday's Gospel.

The Adam and Eve story shows sin for what it is — a lack of love. Man is narcissistic: he is enamored of himself, he wants to be like God. That's the problem. He turns from God, breaks the relationship of love that God wants. And what happens? Adam becomes alienated.

Sin alienates man from God: Adam hides himself. His being put out of the garden shows how serious his sin was — it ruptures his relationship with God. Death follows naturally: it is the inevitable consequence of separating oneself from the God of life. Sin alienates man from himself — Adam feels the sting of the flesh, so he clothes himself. Sin alienates man from others, even from one's wife. Her flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, whom he was to love, cherish, protect, he blames—"The woman gave me fruit from the tree and I ate." Sin alienates man and the world. Man's role is to be head. He names the animals, for he is to rule them. The garden yields its fruits to his work. But after sin, thorns and thistles and sweat. The role of woman is to be heart, to be mother. But after sin, the very membranes of her body harden against her, and in labor she brings forth.

But that is not the whole point of the Genesis story. Adam's sin does not stop with Adam. Instead, it opens a Pandora's box of evils that snowballs through history. Cain kills Abel. Lamech introduces polyg-

amy, murders a youth for merely striking him, blasphemes God. Impurity proliferates. God repents he has made man. He sends the deluge to wash the world clean.

With Noe, God makes a new covenant. But no sooner does man increase and multiply than sin rears its ugly head. The climax comes when Nimrod, the first Hitler, builds a city state, symbolized by the tower of Babel. God said, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth." Nimrod said, "No, let us stay together. We are self-sufficient. The State is your god." In anger God "gives up" on the nations. He lets them go their way. In Chapter twelve God calls a man Abram. Salvation history begins.

But even so, the rest of the Old Testament is the same old story — sin, sin, sin. Finally it dawns on God's Chosen People that they are utterly helpless in the face of sin. So they cry for a Saviour: "Rain down, O heavens, the Just One." At long last the offspring of the woman came and struck the serpent's head and at his spawn: sin.

He broke the stranglehold of sin. Man couldn't. To give us victory, He promised — not help — but His presence. "I am with you." And where is Christ now? In the seven sacraments. But He is in the sacrament of Penance precisely to help man do the humanly impossible, namely, to break the grip of sin. No matter our scientific knowledge or technological advancement, the mystery of evil inundates us. If we would stem the tide, the Eucharist is not enough; we must have frequent recourse to the sacrament of Penance—the Christian's resistance to evil.

The Mouths Of Babes

The well-rounded person is made up of both brains and bronze.

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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