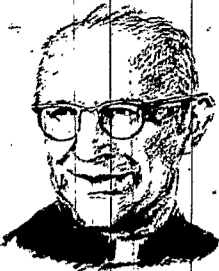


The Word for Sunday

Eternal Life Can Be Hell

By Father Albert Shamon



Sunday's Gospel describes our relationship to Christ as that of sheep to shepherd — not a very flattering image.

Yet it is a consoling one, for though the sheep is the most helpless and weak of all crea-

tures, it is also the subject of most loving care. The Shepherd knows His sheep and speaks to them. Why? To give them the most wonderful thing in the world — eternal life! "He will lead them to springs of life-giving waters" (R11).

But who are His sheep? Those who hear His voice. "My sheep (the emphasis is on the 'my') hear my voice." For not everyone hears His voice. Paul was His voice in Antioch in Pisidia. He spoke to the Jews there, but they did not hear His voice. And Paul said, "Since you reject it (the word of God), you convict yourselves as unworthy of everlasting life" (R 1).

The theme of eternal life runs through Sunday's Readings. Eternal life can be a union and communion of love with the triune God. It can be the joy of a bride and bridegroom on their wedding day, intensified to a degree that staggers the imagination.

Or — and oh, how often this is forgotten — eternal life can be hell. Not all are His sheep. Not all hear His voice. Not all follow Him in daily duties, in affliction, in life, in the hour of death.

Christ implies there is a possibility of perishing. He makes it clear there is someone trying to snatch His own out of His hand. Yet how little we hear of the devil and hell today. We can be brainwashed to a certain viewpoint by what we do not hear almost as much as by what we do hear. Omission is a strategic weapon almost impossible to detect. (For instance, would we be so complacent about Red China, the Soviets, the Viet Cong, Cuba if we were getting both sides of the story?)

Undoubtedly our Lady knew how effectively the devil would use this weapon of omission. So at the Fatima apparition on July 13, 1917, she showed the children there a vision of hell. A Protestant in Mississippi learned just by chance of this apparition. The fact of hell moved him to take instructions. Later, he became a priest. However, before this, he had asked himself: "How can I attract the attention of the world to this vision which so changed my life?"

He decided to ask the famous contemporary, Salvador Dali, to paint this vision of hell. The convert felt a Dali painting would attract worldwide attention. This good Protestant, led by the vision of hell to enter the Church, used all of his life's savings to have the painting done: over ten thousand dollars!

Dali, as usual, painted no ordinary picture. Great artist that he is, he painted something so frightening that the beholder is made to feel like little Jacinta, one of the three Fatima seers, who cried out: "Oh, if our Lady had not been there I would have died of fright!"

On the occasion of this vision of hell, our Lady said: "You see hell where the souls of poor sinners go. So many souls are lost because there is no one to pray and to ask sacrifices for them." "My sheep hear my voice"; His mother's voice is His voice.

How long is it since we thought to pray for the conversion of sinners? Or what sacrifices have we made this very day that a soul about to die in serious sin might receive the grace of final contrition?

To fulfill the requests of our Lady at Fatima, I shall conduct a Holy Hour at Holy Rosary Church, Rochester, every Thursday from eight to nine. Everyone is invited.

Little Jacinta, whose cause for canonization is under way, just before her death commented: "The sins which cause most souls to go to hell are the sins of the flesh." And "many marriages are not of God, and do not please our Lord."

Letters

Council Action Criticized

Editor:

I wish publicly to reject and condemn the resolutions adopted by the National Federation of Priests' Councils assembled in Baltimore, Md., March 15-17, 1971. I further repudiate the stance taken by our own diocesan Priests' Council, April 6, approving in great part the resolutions of the National Federation, when they recommended that Bishop Hogan and his auxiliaries "give all due seriousness to consideration of the recommendations of the National Federation of Priests' Council's statement on celibacy and convey these to the national meeting of the Bishops in Detroit and to the Synod in Rome."

The NFPC resolution on the celibacy issue, approved by the Rochester Council, included the ideas that "the choice between celibacy and marriage for priests now active in the ministry be allowed," that "priests who have already been married be invited to resume the active ministry."

I believe our diocesan Priests' Council has exceeded its function and acted contrary to the very purpose of such councils as considered by Vatican Council II. Such diocesan Priests' Councils were intended to help the Bishop in fulfilling his manifold duties as chief shepherd of the diocesan flock, but only in an advisory and consultative manner.

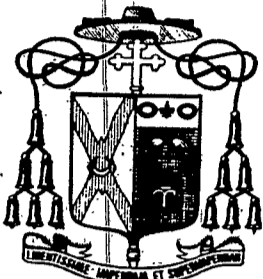
Never were they intended to be political pressure groups to change essential church structures or to establish principles of conduct for Christ's priests.

The issue of priestly celibacy has been authoritatively settled by the teaching of Vatican Council II, by the encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI "On Priestly Celibacy" and the affirmation of this doctrine by our own U.S. Bishops.

According to the mind of the Church priestly celibacy for the Roman Catholic priests is not open to debate, and to attempt to pressurize the bishops and Pope on this matter is rebellious, disedifying and scandalous.

Rev. Joseph McNamara  
Groton

Bishop Hogan's Public Appointments



MAY

- 2—Dedication of St. Paul's Church, Webster, 11:30 a.m.
- 2—Concert Chorale of Sisters of St. Joseph—St. Agnes Auditorium—3 p.m.
- 3—Interdepartmental Staff Meeting—2:30 p.m.
- 3—Mass and Homily, St. Columba's, Caledonia—5 p.m.
- 4—Priests' Council—Becket Hall—10:30 a.m.
- 4—Mens' Club Meeting—Cardinal Mooney High School—8 p.m.
- 5—St. Thomas More Womens' Guild—Mass, Homily, Dinner—5:15 p.m.
- 5—Religious Education Faculty and Staff Workers of St. Margaret Mary's Dinner—Hedge's Nine Mile Point Hotel—9 p.m.
- 6—Confirmation, St. Francis, Phelps—7:45 p.m.
- 7—Confirmation, Sacred Heart, Auburn—7:45 p.m.
- 8—Jubilee Mass, School Sisters of Notre Dame—St. Margaret Mary's Church—11 a.m.
- 8—Ordination to Diaconate—Church of Annunciation—2:30 p.m.
- 9—Police Holy Name Communion Breakfast—Top of Plaza—8:15 a.m.
- 10—Dinner Meeting for Chaplains of Campus Ministry—5:30 p.m.
- 11—Meeting with Directors of Cursillo Movement—10 a.m.
- 11—Columbus Civic Center Board Meeting—11 a.m.
- 11—Confirmation, St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls—7:45 p.m.
- 12-13—Clergy Conference—Notre Dame Retreat House—1:30 p.m.
- 14—Confirmation, St. Joseph's, Livonia—7:45 p.m.
- 15—Confirmation, St. Vincent de Paul, Corning—8 p.m.
- 16—Confirmation, St. Mary's, Corning—3 p.m.
- 16—Confirmation, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Painted Post—5 p.m.
- 18—Confirmation, St. Patrick's, Victor—8 p.m.
- 20—Concelebrated Mass with Classes of 1950 and 1951—5 p.m.
- 21—Bishop Boardman's Golden Jubilee of Ordination—Brooklyn.
- 22—Radio Message—W5AY and Affiliates—7 p.m.
- 23—TV Mass—Channel 10—Diocesan Missions Appeal—8:30 a.m.
- 23—Centenary Celebration of St. Rose of Lima Church—12:15 p.m.
- 23—General Assembly of United Presbyterian Church—War Memorial—8 p.m.
- 24—Mass and Homily—Aberdeen Nursing Home—4:30 p.m.
- 29—Ordinations to Priesthood—St. John's, Greece—3 p.m.
- 31—Opening of Priests' Retreat—8:30 p.m.

COURIER-JOURNAL

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Courier-Journal

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