

LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, 35 Scio St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

God Asks Impossible

Editor:

In the Sept. 1 issue of the Courier Journal, Mrs. Betty Zielinski, Dansville, questioned a quote "Christ never asks the impossible" in a context regarding divorce and remarriage.

Betty merely says that in or out of context she cannot believe that because it is so obvious that God does ask the impossible, and upon our response to Him we receive grace accordingly.

May I just add my reason

for believing as Betty does? I accept it on Jesus' own Word! In John 15:5 He says "— for without me you can do nothing." St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians 4:13 tells us, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

Mrs. Dorothy Frederick
Ardmore Street
Rochester

Drug Series Applauded

Editor:

As members of the Webster Narcotic Guidance Council we

want to make known our thoughts on the excellent three articles written by Barbara Moynihan on the drug problem. Purpose and goals of council work had not been stated so well until now.

We commend Barbara Moynihan for her efforts on behalf of a very serious problem. Hopefully all who read these articles will better understand the problem and appreciate what the councils are trying to accomplish.

Alberta Vickerman
Backus Road
Webster

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Gospel and the First Reading depict as roguish a gallery of crooks as ever papered a police precinct. The rapacious merchants in Amos were money-mad villains (R1). They could hardly wait till the Sabbath was over to open up shop — not unlike some merchants today rationalizing desecrating the Sunday.

But worse still, these same scoundrels were cheap cheats, who tampered with scales and weights and the size of containers. In the Gospel the steward is obviously a rascal — a fast thinking one at that. The debtors are no better: they are ready to make a "fast buck" no matter how dishonest. The master himself is so much of the world that he can appreciate a bit of sharp practice even when directed against himself.

The Gospel parable is susceptible of many meanings. Luke appends to it four sayings of Our Lord that could apply. Readings 1 and 2 exemplify two of these possible applications.

Watching the energy and ingenuity businessmen expend in their business, like the merchants in Amos and the steward and debtors in the Gospel, Christ remarked, if only the other-worldly had as much initiative. If Christians put as much thought and ingenuity into their Christianity, what a Christian world this would be! If Christians worked at their Christianity with the same enthusiasm and intensity as rogues at and for the things they value, there would be as many saints in the Church as people.

St. Paul tells us that the first

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business of a Christian is to pray. To Timothy he wrote: "I urge that prayers be offered . . . it is my wish that man should offer prayer" (R2). Yet what a contrast between the time a Christian spends in his work, hobbies, sports, outside interests and the time he spends (if any) on his knees. What a contrast too in effort. Man's input into the things of God hardly matches the exertion he exercises to reduce a handicap in golf or to work a garden. "The worldly take more initiative than the other-worldly when it comes to dealing with their own kind."

A second saying of Our Lord was, "Make friends for yourselves through the use of this world's goods." Amos, like so many other prophets, condemned exploitation and social injustice; the Gospel, dishonesty. These are definitely not the ways to make money or use it. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII exposed the scandal of social injustice in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Eighty years later, Paul VI commemorated the anniversary of this encyclical with a letter that

does not so much defend labor as warn it of the danger of social injustice. Significantly the Pope singled out strikes:

" . . . the temptation can arise of profiting from a position of force to impose, particularly by strikes — the right to which as a final means of defense remains certainly recognized — conditions which are too burdensome for the overall economy and the social body . . . When it is a question of public services, required for the life of an entire nation, it is necessary to be able to assess the limit beyond which the harm caused to society becomes inadmissible." (#14).

Strikes, like war, are a last resort — "a final means of defense." They are not, nor should they be, the ordinary instrument of bargaining. When a strike harms the common good, then those responsible fall into the same category as the merchants condemned by Amos and the fraudulent steward. We have still to learn that it is only in caring for others that we best take care of ourselves.

Q & A

Q. Is it wrong to have a prewedding shower or to attend one for a Catholic girl who is marrying outside the Church because she is marrying a divorced man? Should we avoid the wedding, also? I claim that going to these affairs shows approval of her action, because I still believe she is doing serious wrong.

A. There never was a church rule covering the situation described except a clear, general principle that one is forbidden to cooperate in the sin of another. Attendance at a wedding shower or this wedding does not today mean approval of the girl's choice. You might very much disapprove of the fact that your friend is marrying a drunk or a social bum, and still felicitate her with the hope that situation will change. While you may deplore her adultery and the offense to law, attending a party or the church ceremony is considered pretty remote "cooperation".

Members of her own family might have sterner obligations for staying away. Early threats of their absence from any part of the wedding celebration might deter her and help her change her mind. Knowledge of their tolerance of her intentions to marry outside the church might be a contributing cause of her defection.

The fact remains, however, general modern indifference to what is precisely right and wrong, and a growing casual attitude about public flaunting of sacred things has led to increased tolerance of improper conduct. These become acts of scandal if they encourage others to imitation just because "everybody seems to be doing it".

Beyond the Stained Glass



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