



"MAYBE IT'S A SIGN THAT YOU SHOULDN'T BE MESSING AROUND WITH ANY OF THIS VIOLENT STUFF, REVEREND."

FR. ALBERT SHAMON  
**Word For Sunday**



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4; (R2) 2 Tim. 1: 6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10.

Every child has heard the story of Daniel in the den of lions. He was there for six days. To nourish him, an angel hair-lifted a man from Judea to Babylon. The man gave Daniel the dinner he was bringing to some reapers in Judea. The author of the Book of Daniel named the man Habakkuk. Whether or not this was the prophet whose oracle we read in Sunday's liturgy (R1), we do not know. However, I think the author used the prophet's name because the theme of his book was based on Habakkuk's words: "The just man, because of his faith, shall live."

Habakkuk was the first prophet who dared to call God to account for His actions. God was raising up Babylon to destroy Israel. Habakkuk's complaint was, "Of course Israel is wicked; but Babylon is far more evil. Why then should Babylon be God's instrument of judgment?" It would be as if a modern prophet asked, "Catholic Hungary, Poland, Cuba may have sinned, but why should greater sinners be used to chastise them?"

God's answer was, "The conquering nation, because of its sinful pride, bore within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Time would tell. The just man, on the contrary, because of his fidelity to God even in

adversity, will in the end triumph — 'the just man, because of his faith, shall live.'"

When the Book of Daniel was written about 167 B.C., it was composed in circumstances not unlike those in Habakkuk's day. Fierce persecution was being waged against the Jews by the maniacal Antiochus. The Jews echoed Habakkuk's complaint of old. Why this permission of evil? The author of Daniel resonated Habakkuk's message: "The just man, because of his faith, shall live." He confirmed the message by telling stories of men and women in the days of Habakkuk who were faithful to God and who because of their faith, lived: the three youths in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the den of lions, and the chaste Suzanna.

However the readers of the book of Daniel could object that what God did for the Jews in the Babylonian Captivity, He was not doing for them in the persecution of Antiochus. Loyal Jews, who held their ground for God like an oak, were martyred; God did not rescue them. The charge could be made that Habakkuk's message was not valid.

The Book of Daniel answered that it was. The just man, because of his faith, his loyalty, his constancy to God, and His law would live! Not necessarily in this life but in a life to come. The author of Daniel advanced Habakkuk's open-ended term "shall live" to embrace eternal life. "Many of those who sleep," he wrote, "shall awake... to everlasting life" (12:12). This was the first explicit teaching in the Old Testament of the resurrection of the dead.

Paul asked Timothy to defend the faith — the doctrine of life eternal (R2). The apostles prayed, "Increase our faith" (R3). Our Lord complained they had hardly faith enough to be increased. Apparently, the apostles at that time were not living by faith, for had they been, they would have changed the world and uprooted pagan life that seemed as unrootable as a sycamore tree.

One day, however, God answered the apostles' prayer. Their faith was increased, and paganism was drowned. If paganism is on the gain again today, maybe it is because faith is on the wane. Paganism will die in proportion as faith lives; and faith's life depends on prayer.

# LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/4 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

## Red China Ties Dangerous

**Editor:**  
The highest ranking Chinese Catholic churchman, Paul Cardinal Yu Pin, and other members of the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation's Council—have issued strong statements warning of dangers in seeking accommodations with the Red Chinese dictators.

Cardinal Yu Pin says: "President Nixon's visit to the Chinese mainland will give no hope to the Church in Red China for relief of suffering. On the other hand, it might aggravate the Church's plight, for her oppressors would feel encouraged by U.S. overtures."

Rev. Raymond J. deJaeger, author, lecturer, 20 years in China prefaces his comments with, "This is the most dangerous policy ever adopted by the United States." He then points out that all the freedom-loving countries in Southeast Asia will now be lost to the United States as allies. Father deJaeger also reveals that the Chinese Communists, "... in their propaganda papers... have already indicated a defeated U.S. represented by their President, is coming to Peking as a prisoner of Mao Tse-tung, accepting his defeat in Vietnam."

Although Red China as the major source of narcotic supply has officially escaped being named as the origin of the problem, many individual authorities testify that letting down trade barriers with Red China will unleash a holocaust of drug addiction in this country. "The China Post," Feb. 6, 1971, editorial says that Red China is "using narcotics to undermine the physical and mental health of as many people as possible in the free world."

It would indeed seem that this is a moral issue which requires comment to the administration.

Mrs. I. B. Newberry  
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Rochester

## Let's Wait For Facts

**Editor:**  
I believe we all know the Attica Prison riot and its aftermath is a tragic thing. However, I was shocked when the news broke that Bishop Hogan, representing the Catholic Church, and Bishop Spears, representing the Episcopal Church, had stated that the "28 demands" of the prisoners be put into effect as soon as possible.

First of all, these prisoners certainly did not hold up their end of the bargaining, thus causing the taking of the prison by force. In my opinion this action had to be taken.

Second, the governor is appointing several groups to investigate the riots thoroughly. I believe instead of everyone "sticking in his two cents worth" we should all calm down and wait.

I do think the clergy should be ready to give spiritual guidance to the prisoners, but let's let our officials handle the legal matters of state. What ever happened to separation of church and state?

Dorothy W. McCarthy  
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Rochester

## Prison Reform Needed Now

**Editor:**  
In the wake of the Attica tragedy, it was soul-satisfying to see Rochester Bishops Joseph L. Hogan (Catholic Diocese) and Robert L. Spears /Episcopal Diocese) issue a joint statement deploring budget cuts in the appropriations for prison inmates and the mentally ill; and calling on New York State to implement immediately prison reforms.

This, for sure, is what Christianity is all about; and not merely the Church satisfying the needs, fancies, and desires of strictly white, middle-and-upper class America.

Let's follow through with action, and vote out of office those persons making such irresponsible and reprehensible decisions as we have seen, of late.

In this way, we who are able, can assist those, whether they be inmates or the mentally ill, who HAVE NOT a vote in their destiny.

Stella F. Cecere  
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