

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Exodus 17:8-13, (R2) 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2, (R3) Luke 18:8.

In his last letter to Timothy St. Paul writes that Scripture is the inspired word of God, and therefore it is useful for teaching. Today's Scriptures teach us about prayer.

The First Reading shows the power of prayer. When Israel fought the fierce and warlike Amalekites, the outcome of the battle depended on the praying hands of Moses. As long as Moses prayed on the hilltop, Joshua prevailed in the battle on the plains. When Moses, through tiredness, ceased, Amalek prevailed. In the propaganda for false peace today, we may forget that Israel fought many wars at the behest of God; and that peace came ultimately only through war and prayers.

One of the greatest generals in World War II was Gen. George Patton. No matter what poor press he got, no matter the sobriquet of "Blood and Guts," Patton was a Christian who, like so many of the great generals of history, was a man of prayer. It might come as a shock to many that Patton attributed the victories of the Third Army in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy to prayer.

When Patton got into France, immoderate rains from September to December bogged down the Saar Campaign. In the fog and rain, that prevented air strikes, the German Panzer divisions made one last all-out effort to turn back the Allies' advance. Patton knew they would succeed unless the rains stopped. So Patton summoned the Third Army Chaplain, Msgr. James H. O'Neill, to his headquarters. He asked the chaplain how much praying was being done in the Third Army. Then, the General went on, 'Chaplain, I'm a strong believer in prayer. Up to now God has been very good to the Third Army. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, no epidemics. This is because a lot of people back home have been praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in

Sicily, and in Italy, simply because people prayed. But we have to pray for ourselves.'

And you know what Patton did? He ordered the chaplain to compose a prayer for the cessation of rain. He had 250,000 copies printed. Every man in the Third Army received a copy on Dec. 14 and was urged by their chaplains to pray the prayer. On Dec. 16 the rains stopped as if by magic. The Third Army moved, relieved beleaguered Bastogne, and struck in time to blunt the last drive of the German Army. The Third Army prayed for fair weather and for battle. They got it.

The Third Reading tackles the knotty problem of unanswered prayers. Our Lord tells the story of a widow and an unjust judge. The judge no doubt was pagan, for Jewish courts had three judges. Pagan judges were notoriously corrupt. Poor St. Paul could not get a hearing for years from either Felix or Festus. He finally had to appeal to Caesar himself.

The point of our Lord's story is not that God is like an unjust judge. Rather the parable teaches by contrast. If an unjust judge answers a prayer, how much more will the Judge of all men who is not corrupt, who needs no bribes, who invites us to ask, who promises He will listen—how much more will He listen to us and answer our prayers!

Often He delays an answer. To test our sincerity. For the greatest danger to prayer is mechanical routine. Persevering prayer says we really want what we seek. Moreover, God sometimes delays in answering prayers, because prayer changes us. Persevering prayer will prepare us for His answer. For often His answer may have to be "No." God knows best.

He knows,
He loves,
He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim,
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice with
Him.

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 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

Centerfolds Praised

Editor:

In these days much good reading material is printed and it is sometimes difficult to keep up with it and be well informed. However, I do appreciate the centerfold of the Courier-Journal with the photography of Laurence Keefe. It takes only a few minutes to get an idea of diocesan activities such as the Bosco House dedication, St. Mary's maternity program or the migrant program in Rush, pictured, last spring.

Continue to keep us informed and up-to-date.

Mrs. Mary B. Dunham
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Eschatological Discussion

Editor:

The kindly disagreements between Father Cuddy and Father Cosgrove interest me. I have always been interested in eschatology (a study of what happens to man after death).

Many years ago I heard a sermon by Dr. Joseph Egan on this subject. At that time, he was a guest preacher at Corpus Christi Church. He tackled the subject in non-technical terms. Ostensibly the purpose was to instill the imperfect motive of fear where the perfect motive of love was weak or lacking. We are taught that the former less worthy motive, while certainly not the ideal, can lead us to salvation. While discussing the loss of one's body at death he exclaimed: "Do you know how a man feels when he loses an arm or a leg? He looks and sees that it is gone! How do you think he will feel after death when he 'looks' and sees nothing! His whole body is gone!"

This leads me to some opinions I would like to express. Man is composed of body and soul. He can never have complete fulfillment after death until they are re-united. There are of course some notable exceptions. Our Lord himself exists Body and Soul in Heaven. Our Blessed Lady (the dogma

of the Assumption) exists likewise.

The theologians dispute about Moses and Elias. The fact that a soul has to wait until the General Judgment to be reunited with the body does not impugn the ecstasy of the Beatific Vision. Inseparable from this ecstatic union with God is the categoric knowledge that the body will be reunited in glory. Contrariwise, the damned have categoric knowledge that their bodies will join their souls in torment. For purposes of this discussion, the souls in Purgatory can be considered the same as the blessed. In this sense, therefore, time must be interspersed with eternity. I disagree with Father Cosgrove who wants to keep these things

in the temporal order. At least till the end of the world, time and eternity will be mixed.

Father Cosgrove also states that we cannot begin to share in God's eternal life until all the temporal events are over. I believe that our eternal life with God begins at the instant of death and the Particular Judgment. Father Cosgrove is not alone in his opinion that time does not exist in eternity. Another priest took me to task and said that eternity is an unchangeable "nunc", a "nowness" and that time is the "passage of material motion." Therefore time cannot exist in heaven.

Daniel L. Davis
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Adam's Rib

The Garden of Eden was where Adam and Eve went topless — down to their toes.

—From Robert Orben's Encyclopedia of One-Liner Comedy.

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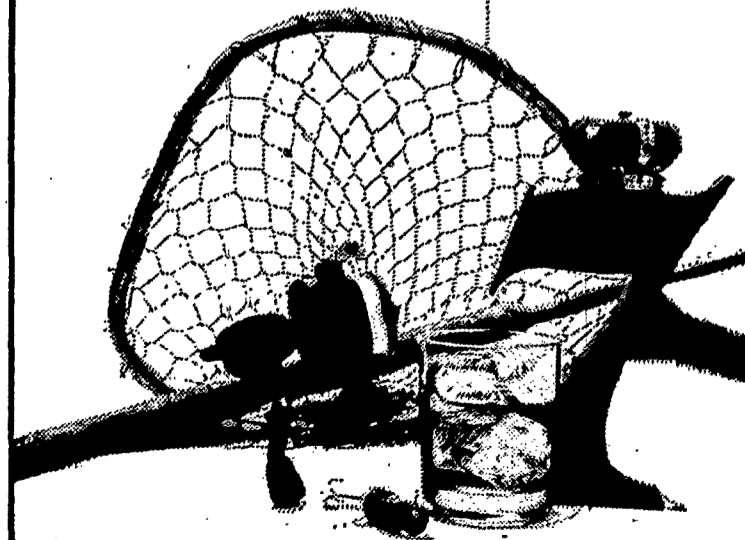
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