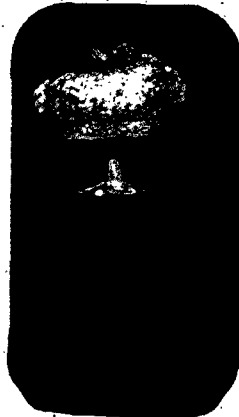


Renewal of Heart — The Heart of Renewal

Lent has traditionally been that special time of personal renewal and conversion effecting a change of heart. Those changes



in attitude which give new direction to our lives and create in us a deeper openness toward God and neighbor are nourished by prayer. Prayer and prayerful reflection are not luxuries in the Christian life.

Without prayer we soon discover that a sense of God's presence in our lives is missing. We begin to lose touch with our inner resources, failing to perceive the gift of God's goodness in the many ordinary moments of daily life.

Christians believe that Jesus is the Word of God. Because He is Word, a Christian must become a sensitive listener, carefully discerning the mystery of Jesus' presence in the many unique moments which make up the fabric of human life. As the Word of God, Jesus is constantly addressing us in limitless ways, inviting us to a closer friendship with Him. The invitation to a deeper relationship with God may find expression in many forms of our daily experiences, ranging from a child's laughter to sudden tragedy. It is within the context of prayer as listening to God's speaking to us through our daily experiences that a person is able to increase his awareness of God's abiding graciousness in his life. It is this

The Slot Man

The Augsburg Publishing House has come up with an anthology of prayers prepared by writers, editors and newsmen

called "The Journalist's Prayer Book." Lord knows that in these dynamic and controversial times, everyone needs all the help possible. News-men are in particular need for they deal with a precious, and often elusive, commodity — truth.



The prayers, as listed in Religious News Service, speak for themselves. For instance, Walter Cron-

kite, the Columbia Broadcasting System's television news anchorman, contributed this prayer:

"Dear God: help me remember and my fellow man understand that the truth

knows neither friend nor enemy, nor can those who pursue it. Amen."

The contemporary emphasis in personal prayer, then, is listening, a quiet reflectiveness, a tending silence allowing us to ponder the situations in which we find ourselves. Prayer is the receptive listening to the rich meaning hidden within daily events. It is a willingness to be led by the Spirit, permitting ourselves to be converted to the Gospel challenges inscribed in the demands of day to day living.

In this context of prayer as listening, the feeling of inadequacy in praying is diminished. Prayer is not a question of personal eloquence, but attentive listening to what the Lord has already spoken in our hearts. Prayer is not a question of precise formulae or of rote mechanical repetition of words, but of sincerity and purity of heart. Prayer is judged successful not in terms of what has been eloquently elaborated before God. Success in prayer is determined by the attitude of gratefulness for God's goodness. This grateful attitude is engendered through careful listening to His manifold presences. Prayer is grounded in Christian attitudes and Gospel values rather than upon specific exercises and functions.

The outstanding model of prayerfulness is Jesus. The richness of His prayer emerged from the patterns of His daily life. There were long intervals of prayerful withdrawal into the stillness of the desert wilderness, where Jesus patiently listened to His Father's abiding influence from within. From

these periods of reflection, Jesus drew upon the strength that comes from life with the Father, which enabled Him to pursue His mission and destiny courageously. In a spirit of simplicity Jesus integrated His prayerfulness with daily life. The moments of deepest involvement, actively spent in loving concern for the poor and sick, were moments He used to reveal His Father's love for mankind. The simple and ordinary background of Jewish agrarian life became the classroom for teaching His followers to willingly accept the Father's will. Prayer gave Jesus the courage and support to ascend Calvary even after the agonizing ordeal of Gethsemane.

Prayer was the unifying factor in Jesus' life, binding together the joys and pains, the work and rest in daily life, but which gave deep meaning and strong direction to His life.

Prayer holds the same promise for our own life. It emerges from our commitment to Gospel values and recognition of God's gift of love and mercy in our life. From the experience of God's loving kindness and forgiveness in his own life, discerned in prayerful listening, the Christian begins anew to be loving and forgiving toward his fellow Christians.

Prayer earnestly directs us to attend to the sensitive but important matters pertinent to human living and loving, matters which we might have left unattended had we not listened in prayer.

By Carmen Viglucci

Newsmen Also Pray

knows neither friend nor enemy, nor can those who pursue it. Amen."

Clifton Daniel, associate editor of the New York Times, writes:

"I pray God to make me wise. I'll take care of the rest."

Benjamin McKelway, former editor of The Washington Star, offered this plea:

"O Lord, please deliver us from bad reporting and bad editing. Please make everybody connected with our newspapers understand how important readers are — far more important than the editors. Give us reporters, O Lord, who spurn rumors and respect only fact. And surround them with editors, O Lord, who are as good as the reporters..."

All may appreciate how Lanze Zavitz, former religion editor of the Buffalo Eve-

ning News, began his prayer:

"Eternal Father: We are they who worship Thee with typewriters instead of altars..."

And a timely prayer is contributed by Burton W. Marvin, journalism professor at Syracuse University:

"Our Father, as journalism comes under attack from various directions for various reasons, help us to assess the rightness or wrongness of charges being made; to defend, resist and persist when we feel we are right; and to amend and reform when we are wrong..."

For what it's worth, I have a credo which I strive to cling to in the face of news input, output, criticism, praise, business conditions, diversion of opinion, news managers and the complexities of modern life in every sphere, including religion.

"The readers come first. Amen."

Editorial

Peace... No Time to Be Bitter

The reconciliation statement by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan and some 250 priests and deacons, asking that we join together to soothe the wounds of war and insure a positive peace, has spurred widespread comment.

Although the statement proposed action on several fronts, its call for amnesty for "those young men who have refused to participate in this war for sincere reasons of conscience" drew the most and, at times, bitterest reaction.

Vitriolic reaction is regrettable. We must not fall prey to the temptation to indulge in character assassination (either of those who signed the statement, or those who didn't). Vituperation must be avoided; those with strong feelings on both sides of the question have sincere reasons for their positions. If the statement did no more than cause diocesans to reflect a little more seriously on this issue then it was successful to that extent.

Some of the criticism of the statement stems from a feeling by some people that it shows a lack of touch with the average Catholic; that those who agree with the statement simply don't realize

that a majority of the people are opposed to amnesty.

We know the Bishop is entirely aware of this and that his proposal would be controversial. It would be an easy issue to avoid. Personal popularity, however, is not a yardstick for measuring bishops. Even those who disagree with the statement must realize that the Bishop, like any man, must examine his conscience and come to grips with such issues. Then he must, unlike any man, tell his flock what he has decided, for he is a spiritual leader.

Some have indicated that they think the Bishop was dictatorial in the statement and the manner of publicizing it. This is disproved by the fact that he asked no one to sign it who didn't agree in conscience with it, promised that there would be no ill feelings. Both those who signed and those who didn't deserve praise for the courage of their convictions.

There are those who feel that the question of amnesty should be left strictly to civil authorities. These people also are sincere and should not be castigated. But they should ask themselves would

Christ have done nothing.

They, as well as everyone else, must note that the statement encompasses issues other than amnesty. It strongly urges that the government, business and all citizens give every possible consideration and assistance to Vietnam veterans "in their efforts to reintegrate their personal and vocational lives into civilian society."

A New York City official says that there are already 4,000 veterans on that city's relief rolls. She also expects some 40,000 more vets to join the 250,000 already there and that these veterans are receiving seriously inadequate public and private priority, particularly when compared with the preferred treatment received by veterans of prior wars.

Such facts and needs should not be overshadowed and lost in argumentation over amnesty.

The statement also proposes help for the rebuilding of lands destroyed in the war and aid for those orphaned by its weapons. Such action not only is in the best tradition of Christianity but also in the best tradition of America.