

# Easter Designated Right to Life Day

Easter Sunday, April 22, will serve as focal point for a drive throughout Monroe County to gather support for a petition urging a constitutional amendment to overturn the Supreme Court decision on abortion.

Easter has been designated as Right to Life Sunday by the diocese and on that day the county Right to Life committee plans to distribute petitions at all Catholic services. A spokesman said that the committee also will ask all faiths to participate in the campaign.

The petition, addressed to the United States Senate and House of Representatives and the State Senate and Assembly, reads:

Whereas the decision rendered by the Supreme Court of the United States on Jan. 22, 1973, in the cases of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton mandates each of the sovereign states of the United States to permit, allow and condone the killing of innocent unborn children, and

Whereas, said court has predicated a living human being's right to the continuance of his life upon his classification according to the quality, stage of development, or the "Meaningfulness" of His existence and

Whereas a government dedicated from its inception to the proposition of the God given, inalienable right to life should be responsive to this, the most fundamental of all principles.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that we the people of the State of New York and of the United States of America do hereby jointly and severally petition you who are our elected representatives to redress this our grievance, and the grievance of future generations, by appropriate legislative action to propose, ratify, and implement the necessary amendment to the Constitution of our beloved United States, in order to protect the lives of all human beings, including our innocent unborn children so that we may once again raise our heads among civilized mankind, free of the shame of this disgraceful decision of our Supreme Court.

On Jan. 22, a Supreme Court ruling refused to give an unborn fetus the status of "person." The court said that during the first three months of pregnancy the state cannot interfere with a decision for abortion and that during the second three-month period the state may regulate medical aspects of abortion.

# Bill Would Return Abortion Controls to the States

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — States would be given back the right to regulate abortion practices under a constitutional amendment introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. C. Williams Whitehurst (R-Va.) and 12 co-sponsors.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in January that elected state legislatures may not set standards for an abortion procedure during the first three months of pregnancy, Mr. Whitehurst noted.

"The appropriate response to such an exercise of raw judicial power," he said, "is to amend the Constitution to expressly guarantee the people's right to have this issue decided by representatives directly accountable to the public." His measure would "restore this right," he added.

The amendment states: "Nothing in this Constitution shall bar any state or territory or the District of Columbia, with regard to any area over which it has jurisdiction, from allowing, regulating, or prohibiting the practice of abortion."

The Congressman, who is a United Methodist, pointed out the language of his legislation would permit the enactment of a "wide range of legislative approaches to abortion. It would not relieve the state legislatures of the obligation to revise laws that are vague, nor would it affect the obligation to comply with due process of law.

"The argument is often put forth," he observed, "that women have a right to their own bodies and to determine the size of their families. This is true, but at the same time all rights imply certain responsibilities. These days we have many, effective ways to prevent conception, both medical and surgical, and I am in full agreement with their use.

"Once a woman is pregnant, however, there is another life and body to be concerned with — that of the unborn child. It is to see that the right to life is given proper consideration that I believe the state has a responsibility to step in," he asserted.

"That life does not begin at nine months, six months, three months, or any other arbitrarily determined moment; it is life from the outset," Mr. Whitehurst declared.

The Virginia lawmaker said there are "unquestionably" cases in which abortion is "justified, but just not wanting the child is not, to me, sufficient reason for doing away with it.

"This is not a partisan issue, nor even a liberal-conservative one," he said. "In the last election, both President Nixon and Senator McGovern advocated state rather than federal action in this field. The American people should have the right to decide this issue for themselves. This bill provides that opportunity," he said.

Co-sponsors of the legislation are Congressmen Bill Archer (R-Texas), Tom Bevill (D-Fla.), Joel Broyhill (R-Va.), Edward J. Derwinski (R-Ill.), James Hastings (R-N.Y.), Robert Huger (R-Mich.), John Hunt (R-N.J.), William Ketchum (R-Calif.),


Stanford E. Parris (R-Va.), Robert Sikes (D-Fla.), Antonio Won Pat (D-Guam), and Roger Zion (R-Ind).

The measure has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

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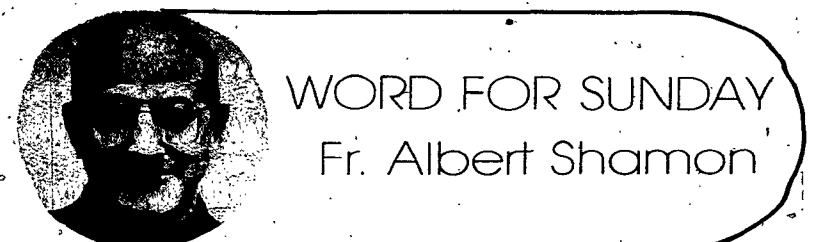
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**WORD FOR SUNDAY**  
 Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) Jer. 31:31-34. (R2) Heb. 5:7-9. (R3) Jn. 12:20-33.

In Sunday's Gospel some Greeks came to see Jesus during the last week of His life on earth. These Greeks were not Jews who spoke Greek and dwelt in foreign lands (Hellenists); they were real, honest-to-goodness Gentiles who had embraced Judaism. It was for such converts as these that the Temple provided the spacious, Court of the Gentiles. These Greeks had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They no doubt had witnessed the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and His expulsion of the merchants and bankers from the Temple. If we remember that this act restored to its proper use the only part of the Temple opened to the Gentiles, we can better understand why the Greeks wanted to see Jesus.

Very likely, their request was to get more than a look at Him. For merely a glimpse, they would not have had to approach Philip. Moreover, Jesus' answer indicated that they wanted to have a private conversation with Him on serious religious matters. Perhaps they wanted to validate His credibility as a Messiah.

There is a further possibility. Undoubtedly, the Greeks had witnessed the hostility of the Jewish leaders to Jesus. Perhaps these inquisitive Greeks had agreed among themselves to try to persuade Him to turn to the Gentiles, should he prove to be what they were suspecting. They could offer Him a much better reception than He was getting from His own bigoted countrymen.

The way the Gospel account is written lends itself to such an interpretation. For instance, the term "approached" has a certain tone of gravity and solemnity about it. The salutation "Sir" shows the respect they felt for the disciple of such a Master. "We should like to" expresses a corporate deliberation. "To see" connotes the desire to procure an interview. To get it, they went to Philip (whose name is Greek)

because he was from Bethsaida, which was near the ten Greek cities on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Philip was cautious about getting the interview, because he sensed the gravity of their request. Instead, he went to Andrew (the only other apostle with a Greek name) and both went to inform Jesus.

Jesus, of course, was profoundly impressed by the request. Whether or not the Greeks got to see Him, John never says. What was important was the fact that Gentiles wanted to see Jesus. Jesus was elated! A whole new world opened up before His eyes. He saw in those few Greeks the first fruits of the full harvest of heathen lands — the advance guard of multitudes no man could number.

But He also knew that the only road to the Gentiles was to become free from His Jewish mission. What He needed to do as a teacher had been done. What remained to be done could be done only by dying. Hence, this incident turned His thoughts to His passion, death and resurrection. Jesus gave no answer to Philip and Andrew. Instead He became absorbed in deepest reflection. The Gentiles were knocking at the door of the Kingdom of God; it was a signal that a decisive hour had come for Himself and for the whole human race.

As the seed must die to bring the harvest, so must He be generous enough to lay down His life for the life of others. Grandly, Jesus accepted His passion: "It was for this that I came to this hour," and He hinted at its worldwide outreach: "I — once I am lifted up from the earth — will draw all men to myself."

The disciple is not above the Master. To think always of physical safety and personal advantage — the "me" side of life — is to lose one's real life. To serve God at the cost of personal privilege is to keep one's real life — eternal life. This is the new heart we pray that God create in us; the heart set on true values, the heart seeking them no matter the cost.

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