



WORD FOR SUNDAY

Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday Readings: (R1) Mt. 5:1-4. (R2) Hebr. 10:5-10. (R3) Lk. 1:39-45.

On this last Sunday before Christmas, the Readings speak of the coming of the Lord. The Gospel presents Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who blesses Mary because of the fruit of her womb. The prophet Micah (R1) predicts that the Virgin's Child will be born in the smallest clan of Juda, Bethlehem-Ephrathah. The author of Hebrews (R2) tells why this Child enters our world — to die that we might live.

On the eve of so Christ-filled and grace-full a feast as Christmas, I am loath to be contentious or litigious. Yet, Mr. Justice Leventhal of the Court of Appeals, District of Columbia, if I can believe what I have read, has decreed that this year the Nativity scene cannot be included in the display in the Ellipse of the White House in the observance of Christmas. This is much like Portia telling Shylock he can have his pound of flesh, but no blood.

Of course, all Americans should rejoice at this "enlightened" judgment, at this evidence of the success of the campaign, not merely to separate Church and State, but rather to banish every vestige of religious symbolism from American public life.

Yet, 60 million Christians need not be dismayed — we still have Santa Claus (but his turn is next). Then, too, we still are free to have crosses on our Church steeples. We can still wear green on St. Patrick's Day. But just you wait and see, surely as I am writing, some other brilliant jurist, like a Daniel come to judgment, will discover some "constitutional" way to save unborn generations from this effrontery too. How dare crosses on Church steeple spear the "secular" sky! How dare Irishmen parade on St. Patrick's Day with shamrocks (those subtle symbols of the Trinity)!

What an offense to liberal and secularistic eyes must be our Museums of Art! How awful that they too advertise and endorse the "Christian" superstition! For instance, one goes to the National Gallery of Art (the Mellon Collection) in Washington, D.C., to see art; and lo and behold what meets his eyes but religious art!

The horrendous fact is that acres upon acres of gallery walls are covered with frescoes and canvasses brazenly depicting scenes of the life of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and the Saints in intolerable legions. El Greco's great paintings of St. Martin and the Beggar, The Virgin with St. Ines and St. Tecla are there. So are Rembrandt's Apostle Paul, and The Descent from the Cross. And Dali's Sacrament of the Last Supper; Van Eyck's Annunciation; Lotto's Nativity. And

Creche Erected In Washington

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — From today through Jan. 1, spectators will be able to view a privately sponsored nativity scene near the annual Pageant of Peace in the nation's capital. Sponsored by the American Christian Heritage Association of Greenbelt, Md., the creche has been erected near the Ellipse, where the pageant is to be staged, with the permission of the National Parks Service.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Penn Yan — Today, Dec. 19 the Christmas party of St. Michael's Catholic Daughters of America is to be held at Hilltop Inn. Ruby McClure is in charge of reservations.

Tintoretto's, Raphael's, Botticelli's — good heavens! — all on religious subjects, right in the nation's capitol and supported by public taxes! Imagine!

The same thing is true of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Boston's, Philadelphia's, Chicago's, San Francisco's, and countless other museums.

Should not liberal judges, like the "heroes" of the French Revolution, tear those paintings from the walls and burn them? I'll wager some addlebrained legalist in a not too far off future will try.

Herod tried to get the Christ Child, too. Herod is dead, but we still celebrate the Child's birthday.

So, Merry Christmas to all — even to those jurists who do not know what Christmas is all about.



Open House

The DePaul Clinic, which switched its location from 50 Chestnut St. to 681 Brown St. earlier this year, held an open house on Thursday, Dec. 13, to show off its new headquarters to the public. The clinic offers mental health services to all people of northwestern Monroe County, as well as through Family Court and agencies under Catholic Charities. On hand that day were [l-r] Sister Mary dePazzi, board member; Marie Ward, Gertrude Schmitt, visitors; and Dr. Albert Sullivan, DePaul Clinic's director.

BISHOP ON TV

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will be the special Christmas Day guest on the Eddie Meath Show, Dec. 25, 8 a.m., WHEC-TV, Channel 10.

The Party House

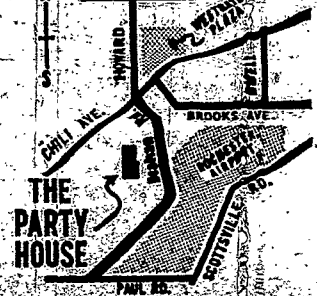
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