

**WORD FOR SUNDAY**



Fr. **Albert Shamon**

**Sunday's Readings:** (R3) Jn. 6:37-40. (R1) Wis. 3:1-9. (R2) Rom. 14:7-12.

I know next Sunday is All Souls Day. I know too that most of you who read this column will have sense enough to remember them in November.

But I wonder how many this November will know enough to vote intelligently on ERA (The Equal Rights Amendment).

This fall every voter in New York State will be asked to vote for or against ERA.

This vote is crucial because New York State is a key state. As New York State goes, so goes the nation. ERA on the national level needs only a few states to be ratified. All eyes are on the Empire State. Success on the state level will inevitably lead to success on the national level, as, for instance, happened in abortion.

When you have a leak, you call in a plumber, not an electrician. When we want to know about an amendment, wise men go to constitutional lawyers, not to mushroom organizations of women.

There are, of course, some lawyers pro ERA; but an impressive galaxy of constitutional lawyers stand strongly against it. Freund of Harvard, Emerson of Yale, Rice of Notre Dame, White of Michigan, Frankfurter, Ervin — all say ERA is bad legislation.

And why is ERA bad law?

ERA is bad law, because it disregards the God-given differences between the sexes. Any law that ignores the differences between the sexes is both an insult to the law itself and is woefully lacking in rationality.

God made man. He made them equal. Therefore there should be no discrimination against women. But God made man male and female — not identical. Therefore there should be sexual distinction. ERA leaves no room for laws based on the physiological and functional differences between the sexes. In ERA equality means identity! For ERA says: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged . . . on account of sex." (Note: women are not even mentioned in the proposed amendment.)

Consider this: a man and woman may marry. Then why cannot a man marry a man, or a woman marry a woman? Under ERA, they could; for to forbid them would be to deny them equality of rights on account of sex.

Even more horrible: a man and woman may adopt a child. Then why cannot a man married to a man, or a woman to a woman do the same? Under ERA, how could they be stopped? Any law forbidding it could be declared unconstitutional as denying equality of rights on account of sex.

Or consider this: Any church that does not ordain women could get into trouble. ERA would give radical organizations, like NOW, a legal stranglehold to institute suits against the tax-exempt status of churches on the grounds that they are violating the Constitution.

Remember Shylock lost 3,000

ducats and almost his life on a technicality of law.

"Bad law," remarked Jean Jacques Rousseau, "leads to worse laws."

ERA will open up a Pandora's box of litigation. It will transfer the field of legal battles from the legislatures (where the voter has influence) to the courts (where the voter has no influence).

Even pro-ERA proponents admit that "much of the Amendment's interpretation will await determination by the courts." Thus it gives activist judges the most disturbing kind of latitude. ERA on the national level will give the Supreme Court a blank check. But, who wants the Supreme Court whose decisions in the last two decades have overturned traditional American values in the field of education (no prayer, bible reading in schools), public morality (widest possible definition of pornography), and sanctity of life (abortion).

After all equality is not an unlimited good. Why should it be canonized? In the French Revolution, Liberty gave Equality, but Equality destroyed Fraternity under Robespierre. What crimes has Communism not committed in the name of equality! The three Persons in God are equal, but deny the distinction and you have the heresy of Unitarianism. Equality of Rights that denies distinction between the sexes, as ERA does, is legal heresy!

American women are expert consumers. They have learned the hard way that you cannot always trust the language on the labels or the extravagant claims of the advertisers. Women must not be seduced by the sweet-sounding label of equality.

The greatest inequality of all is to treat unequals as equals.



**Help From the K of C**

Walter Carlan, left, looks on after having received a check for \$500 for the Ithaca Speech Clinic, while Grand Knight Peter Portorti of Ithaca Council 277, Knights of Columbus, presents a second \$500 check to Patricia Roy to aid the Special Children's Center. Ernest Jackson, right, is a member of the Ithaca Council and a Charities and Benevolence coordinator for the State Council.

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