

U.S. Bishops Select Action Committee

Washington, D.C. (RNS)— Roman Catholic bishops and four lay members of the Bishops' Advisory Council were named to a special ad hoc committee charged with developing a five-year "plan of action" for social justice in the U.S. Catholic Church.

In consultation with other committees of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC), the ad hoc committee appointed by Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin, president of the bishops' conferences, will be responsible for an overview of the handling of the recommendations of last year's Detroit "Call to Action" conference.

Most of the recommendations have been parceled out to various committees of the NCCB and the USCC for "appropriate" action.

Once the "plan of action" has been accepted by the bishops' conference generally, the committee will be responsible for overseeing its implementation. The committee will also submit a written public report on the process at the NCCB general meetings in November for the next five years.

Chairman of the new committee will be Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis. He will be joined by Archbishop Thomas Donnellan of Atlanta, Archbishop Peter

Gerety of Newark, Bishop Joseph McNicholas of Springfield, Ill., Bishop Joseph Howze of Biloxi, Miss., and Bishop Manuel Moreno of Los Angeles.

Lay members of the committee are Joseph V. Libonati of Denver; Mrs. Teresa Posey of Washington, D.C., secretary of the Advisory Council; Fred Simon of Cleveland, and Mrs. Geri Marcavage of Leesville, S.C.

Although the nation's bishops — at their meeting in Chicago last May — voted all 182 recommendations of the "Call to Action" conference to committees, they approved a 4,500-word document indicating their opposition to some of the recommendations as contrary to Church teaching and discipline.

However, consideration is to be given to the recommendations the bishops opposed, such as those calling for the ordination of women to the priesthood, an end to mandatory priestly celibacy, more freedom of choice in artificial contraception, and the removal of strictures against divorced and remarried Catholics and homosexuals.

The large majority of the 182 recommendations were strongly endorsed by the bishops, ranging from a condemnation of racism to opposition to the nuclear arms race.

ALL IN THE FAMILY



Sarah Child

I awoke in a cold sweat. In that natural hypnotic state which occurs every morning between sleep and full alertness my subconscious had reminded me about the two dozen cupcakes I had blithely promised the soliciting agent (a volunteer mother) on the phone the week before.

The event, whatever it had been, must have passed — minus 24 cupcakes (any flavor, any frosting) It was not that the social occasion would have been ruined by my forgetfulness. The committee chairmen who think these things up never underestimate the appetites of the kids involved.

They sit at night with pencil in hand musing thoughtfully prior to the next day's telephone marathon to as yet unsuspecting mothers of involved children.

"Let's see," they say to themselves. "Twenty-four girl scouts? Two thousand chocolate chip cookies ought to be just about right," as if the youngsters had not eaten a meal in the last 72 hours and would be deprived of food for a full week after THE EVENT.

It would be doubtful in the onslaught of chocolate cupcakes from suburban tracts far and wide that 24

would even be missed. But I knew I had failed. I had failed the chairman. The kids. The occasion. Maybe even motherhood and the spirit of a generous America for all I knew.

Now fully awake I began by the process of elimination to see who or what it was that I had failed.

The Little League. No, their picnic is scheduled for August. The Pixie league. They, thank God, are not given to extracurricular social events.

Maybe it was the Suzuki Violin Recital? The school family night? The piano teacher? No, she doesn't believe in recitals.

Aha! The ballet and tap dance recital. Wrong! That's later in the month.

Maybe the last swim class before summer starts? Nooo! The water would get all crummy.

Teacher Appreciation Day? Treat Your Class — It's Your Friends Birthday Occasion? The-teacher-is-having-a-baby-and-leaving event? Wrong! Wrong!

My own kids' birthday? Good grief have I slighted one of my own children? No.

Field-trip-to-the-Planetarium-and-we're-having-a-party-on-the-bus affair? The fourth-grade-social-science-class-is-planting-a-time-capsule-and-want-to-leave-evidence-of-a-20th-century-staple?

Memorial Day is over. Fourth of July is at least a week or so away. So what did I miss?

Never mind I hear the

phone ringing. It is 6:45 a.m. I answer it. "Certainly, Certainly," I say, my voice only slightly beclouded with sleep. "A two pound bag of jelly beans. No licorice. Before noon Wednesday. Send them in with my youngster. I'll be glad to."

And I thought Easter was 10 months away.

BISHOP APPOINTED

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope Paul has named Father Hans Brenninkmeijer, OP, to be bishop of Kroonstad, Orange Free State, South Africa.

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WORD FOR SUNDAY

Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 9:18-24. (R1) Zec. 12: 10-11. (R2) Gal. 3: 26-29.

"I will pour out," said God through the prophet Zechariah. Pour out what? The spirit of grace and petition — that is, a new heart. Conversion is a gift of God Himself. And He gives it because of Him "whom they have thrust through," namely, Jesus, whose death was confirmed by a centurion's spear-thrust into His side.

In the gospel, two events are narrated that originally did not occur together. One is Peter's confession that Jesus is the "Messiah of God." The other is Jesus' prophecy of His own death and resurrection, together with a statement of the conditions for discipleship.

As St. Luke has recounted them, both take place after the prayer of Jesus — "one" when Jesus was praying. Every time our Lord embarked on a new stage of His ministry, Luke shows Jesus as praying (Lk. 21: 6-12; 9:29; 11:1; 22:31-32). Luke seems to suggest that Jesus is always praying out His mission when one of its dimensions are totally clear to Himself. Prayer is not just make-believe, to give His disciples an example. It seems never the future was

cloudy, Jesus prayed. As in the case of any man, the future was often dark to Jesus and the uncertainty of it all troubled Him, as in the Garden. His human will was incapable of itself to do the Father's will, so He turned to the Father in prayer. His prayer was very real!

At prayer, on this particular occasion, Jesus became aware of what Messiahship really meant for Him. He saw that the Father willed His Messiahship to be gentle and forgiving, not political and vengeful as in current thinking. As such He saw He would be opposed, would suffer and die. And yet He knew the Father would not forsake Him, that His plan would be realized after death — and so there would be a resurrection.

Jesus conveyed this knowledge to the disciples. But they, at the time, still entertained the notion of a political Messiah who would exercise vengeful judgment on the nations. So Jesus "strictly forbade them to tell this (that Jesus is the Messiah of God) to anyone." They were as yet blind to all the implications of Messiahship. That the Messiah was to suffer and that suffering was to be the condition of their discipleship — that was the furthest thing from their thoughts at this time.

Two lessons emerge from Sunday's readings: the necessity of prayer and the need to suffer.

Jesus prayed often. Why? To see more clearly His Father's will and then to be strengthened to do it. How often prayer is just our effort to bend God's will to do our will. We say prayers are not answered, because

we don't get what we want, when often what we want is not what God wants. Prayer should have vision as its object. "Lord, that I may see," prayed the blind man. So ought we to pray: to see God's will, and, seeing it, to be empowered to follow it.

The inevitable consequence, of course, will be suffering. The world loves its own, but when you forsake, not the world (a place) but worldliness (a spirit) — ah, then, the world will persecute you. "If you are not of the world, the world will hate you." However, this is the price of resurrection. Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains only a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it shall bear fruit. As Thompson put it so graphically, "Must Thy harvest fields be dunged with rotten death?" The answer is yes, 'tis the law of life; life is found through the losing of it for the sake of Christ.

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