

Editorials

A Saint For All Times

We have come to take him so much for granted, we accept him so casually; that he is indeed a member of the family. And this is 800 years after his birth.

Little would he have suspected that when he put aside his worldly pursuits to seek his God that he would be founding one of the most beloved, enduring, effective and wide-ranging religious communities of history.

Nor could he have known when he composed his short, personal prayer, that it would become one of the most popular pieces of literature of all times, even accepted by schismatic Christian faiths, not yet existent in his time. A kind of mysterious unifier, only applicable in his future.

As Laurence Mullin of Religious News Service writes, "To some, he was a tormented mystic; to others, a clown of God; to still others, either an inspired church reformer, or an incipient hermit."

Mullin points out that he has been saluted as "the

most lovable of the saints," as the "only true Christian," as "the last Christian." He has been seen by varied groups of admirers as the world's "first socialist," a harbinger of the humane treatment of animals, as an "ecologist" before his time.

But to a contemporary, he was no more, or less, than "a simple, unlettered man, delightful to God and man."

Yet, over 800 years, he has become all things to all people. It is almost mind-boggling to think that this unassuming person, born in 1181, would become a heroic figure of the 20th Century creation, the comic book.

Poetically speaking, his "Canticle of the Creatures" may be his outstanding piece. But to millions of present-day mortals, of all religious and social persuasions, the Prayer of St. Francis is his most appealing. The prayer that begins, "Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace . . ." is as relevant today as the humble personal example provided by its author.

As British historian John M. Todd puts it:

"His life speaks with an insistence like that of the Gospel; it has that element of protest, of single-mindedness, conversion, simplicity — in fact of charity, of faith and hope — which (lies) at the heart of all genuine Christianity."

Appealing

As the spadework continues for the first annual Bishop's Catholic Thanks Giving Appeal, one of the early findings has been that many diocesans are not aware of the myriad of programs and services provided by the various departments operating out of the Pastoral Center.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has stressed that perhaps the most important aspect of the appeal is to tell the story of the diocesan Church, to educate all on the job being done in their names.

In this light, the Courier-Journal last week instituted a five-part series detailing the work of the departments under the five principal diocesan divisions. Our first segment outlined the work of the personnel division: this week we center on the special ministries division.

The series states the overall expenses of each division and exactly how much each will need from the appeal. We feel it is important for all to read this series of special reports to see how their contributions are used.

But, as Bishop Clark has stressed, it is perhaps more important for all to know the extensive and beneficial work being done in their behalf by the many pastoral departments.

and Opinions

Pollution Threat Frightening

Editor:

In the whole water pollution problem, there is probably nothing more disturbing than the threat of widespread contamination of groundwater. It isn't possible to add pesticides and chemical weed killers to water anywhere without threatening the purity of water everywhere.

Very seldom, if ever, does nature operate in closed and separate compartments and she has not done so in distributing the earth's water supply. Rain, falling on the land, settles down through the pores and cracks in soil and rock, penetrating deeper and deeper until eventually it reaches a zone where all the pores of the rock are filled with water, a dark subsurface sea, rising under hills, sinking beneath valleys. This groundwater is always on the move, sometimes at a rate so slow that it travels no more than 50 feet a year, sometimes rapidly, by comparison, so that it moves nearly a tenth of a mile in a day. It travels unseen waterways, until here and there it comes to the surface as a spring, or perhaps it is tapped to feed a well, but mostly it contributes to streams and, so, to rivers.

Except for what enters the streams directly as rain or surface runoff, all the running water of the earth's surface was at one time groundwater. And thus, in a very real and frightening sense, pollution of the groundwater is pollution of water everywhere.

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Priest Alone Consecrates

Editor:

James Dombeck in his letter of 9-9 makes several errors concerning the Most Holy Eucharist.

1. "The liturgical leader" proclaims the life, death and resurrection of Jesus."

We do not have a "liturgical leader." We have a priest — the word meaning "one who

offers sacrifice." Since the Holy Mass is a sacrifice, the term "liturgical leader" is erroneous.

2. "Giving symbolic expression to His presence within the believing community. The presence does not occur through the action of the celebrant but through the participation of the entire community . . ."

The Council of Trent officially requires all Catholics to believe that those who declare Jesus to be present only as a symbol are condemned . . . We are also required by the Council of Trent to give the worship known as *latría* to the Most Holy Eucharist. This would not be possible without Jesus truly present, not only "within the believing community" but really and substantially on the altar.

We are also required by the Council of Trent to believe that this transubstantiation occurs by the celebrant pronouncing the words of consecration. Jesus is brought to us through the action of the Holy Spirit when the priest, intending to truly offer the Holy Sacrifice as the Church intends, pronounces the holy words of consecration. This does not depend on the community, but on the priest alone. Indeed the Council of Trent further condemns those who say that a true Holy Mass is not offered unless the people are present. It may be offered by the priest alone.

"Mediator Dei," the encyclical of Pius XII, also brings out that the people are priests in an auxiliary sense only.

3. "... the participation of the entire community of which the celebrant is a member in a hierarchy of gifts and charisms rather than a hierarchy of office. The presider's own charism is acknowledged in the community by ordination, it is not conferred by ordination."

The "presider's" (an incorrect term taken from an ancient letter which only intended to distinguish between pagan and Christian priests, and not applicable to the semantic

understanding today) own "charism" does not depend on the "community" for acknowledgement. It is conferred by a hierarchy of orders. Jesus did not ordain all as bishops but as the hierarchical head ordained the apostles who ordained others. "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." The rest of Jesus' followers were not ordained. But we are also obliged by the Council of Trent to believe in seven sacraments, one of which is Holy Orders. It is not a charism.

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Correction

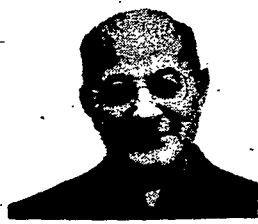
An unintended omission changed the meaning of a paragraph in a letter by Patricia Seewald of Freeville

which appeared in the Courier-Journal Sept. 23.

The second paragraph should have read: "Regarding the question of whether a woman can 'be' Christ or act in the person of Christ, i.e., represent Him in the sacraments, etc., I believe denial of this is tantamount to denial of St. Paul's affirmation that those who are 'baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor freeman, there cannot be male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:27; cf. Paul on the 'Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:12f, 27).

Her closing sentence should have read: "Our concern should not be which gender performs the work of the kingdom, but that the work gets done so that His kingdom will come — according to the prayer Christ Himself brought to us all."

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Shepherd And Sheep

Sunday's Reading: (R3) Mt. 22:1-14. (R1) Is. 25:6-10. (R2) Phil. 4:12-14.

The response to Sunday's first reading is the justly famous Shepherd Psalm (23). Entire books have been written on this Psalm. Two good ones are Keller's "A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23," and Allen's "God's Psychiatry." Allen maintains in his book that anyone can solve any problem by reading Psalm 23 meditatively five times a day for a week. Try it. Let us share with you some reflections on the Psalm. It neatly divides into two parts: God as the Good Shepherd (verses 1-4) and God as kind Host (verses 5-6).

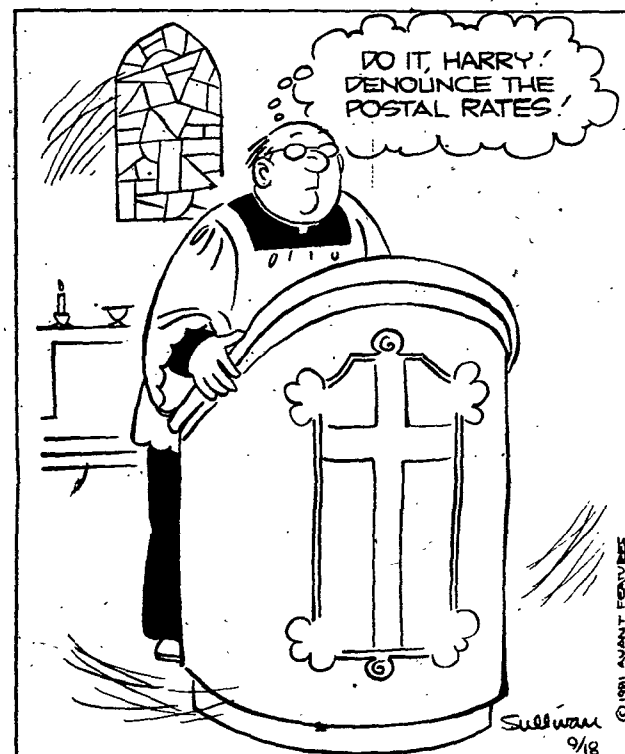
The Bible says it is a Psalm of David. Perhaps. Maybe David was reflecting

on how good God was to bring him to the table of King Saul. Its origin, however, is not that important, for the Psalm is inspired and applies to all of us.

"The Lord is my shepherd." "The Lord" — wow! He who made heaven and earth and all things. He, therefore, who is all-powerful, mighty Creator. Therefore, I need fear nothing.

This Lord, all-powerful, "is my shepherd." Not was or will be, but is — here and now. "My shepherd" — concerned about me personally!

Consequently, "I shall not want." He knows how to take care of me in time of prosperity. First of all, "in verdant pastures He gives me repose." He knows enough to make the sheep lie down and rest after pasturing. To drink water



before the grass is digested would harm the sheep. So, the wise shepherd gives them repose, so that they can chew their cud, digest the grass, before quenching their thirst.

Secondly, sheep fear running water. They can no more swim than a man with an overcoat on. They will not drink, therefore, from deep or running water. So, the shepherd will build, with rocks, a dam to make a still pool beside the running stream.

Because the shepherd is a shepherd, not a hired hand, "for his name's sake," he will guide the sheep in the right paths — that lead to these verdant pastures and restful waters. This might mean having to walk in dark valleys, but the sheep are unafraid so long as the shepherd is at their side. The rod, the shepherd's awesome club, can cudgel to death or frighten away even such fearsome predators as lions or bears. The staff, with its crook, can be placed under the stomach of a sheep that may have wandered and slipped to some ledge and haul it to safety.

Once arrived at the verdant pasture, the shepherd spreads a table

before his sheep. Each spring shepherds dig out thorny bushes and poisonous plants that could harm the sheep as they graze. "In sight of my foes," the sheep graze, for predatory animals look on, circling the flock, hoping to be able to pounce upon a stray, but keeping their distance for fear of the shepherd's club.

The shepherd sits on a rock, as the sheep graze. As we name our own pets, dogs or cats, so shepherds in the East had names for each of their sheep. He calls them one by one, by name; and when they scamper to him, he examines them closely for any scratches or cuts, especially on the nose. When he discovers one, he anoints the sheep's head with oil to prevent infection.

Such is the Lord our God toward us; a good Shepherd and a kind Host. He knows what is best for us. He provides for us in the sacraments — goodness and kindness all the days of our lives. All we need do is, like the sheep, trust Him, love Him, stay with His flock — dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives, "for years to come." Then one day He will bring us to the green pastures of paradise.