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The Seven Last Words

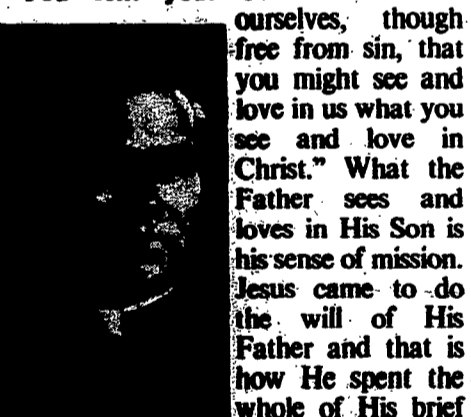
I thirst.



Known as the "Seven Last Words," the final utterances of Christ as He hung on the cross provide fit and interesting Lenten meditation. Each week during Lent, a different diocesan priest will discuss each of these "last words" in the Courier-Journal. The fifth writer of this special Lenten series is Father Albert Delmonte, pastor of St. Anthony's Church, Elmira.

By Father Albert Delmonte

In Preface VII for Sundays in Ordinary Time we pray to the Father: "You sent your Son as one like ourselves, though free from sin, that you might see and love in us what you see and love in Christ."



What the Father sees and loves in His Son is his sense of mission. Jesus came to do the will of His Father and that is how He spent the whole of His brief life on earth, fulfilling the mission given Him from above. He even accepted the intense pain of crucifixion, the sadness and torment of betrayal and abandonment by His friends as part of His mission.

Now He who is the very "fountain of living waters" thirsts? The Father sent Him "as one like ourselves." Who are we? Do we thirst? Yes, we thirst for love, for affirmation, for approval from others. We thirst for support, for recognition. Nothing wrong with that.

In our better moments we thirst for justice, for goodness, for virtue, for holiness. And we thirst for days free of hassles, free of the pressure of competition and production, days free of criticism and bills and enemies and headaches. We want answers to questions about sickness and pain, suffering and death. We want the threat of nuclear war to just go away — disappear — and we want the world's starving to find an oasis somewhere (preferably far away) where everyone will have enough nourishment so we won't have to see the faces of hungry children on posters in church vestibules.

We thirst for a lot of things and none of them bad! To have all these things would bring peace of mind, contentment . . . and no challenge.

God loves us more than we could ever comprehend and He sees in us great potential. He put it there. But He sees us stifle that potential; He sees us reneging on the mission we accepted the day we received the Sacrament of Confirmation. By our presence that day in the assembly place of God's people and by our standing before the bishop who anointed us with Chrism, we said publicly that no longer would we be concerned just with our own well-being. Thenceforth, we would acknowledge the gift(s) that God had given us and reach out to share with others who also thirst.

It was explained to us that the threefold mission of Jesus — that of priest, prophet and king — was to continue through us. As priest He gave of Himself in total sacrifice to those who were sick in body, to those who needed the joy of being healed, of being forgiven and restored to wholeness. He laid down His very life that we might live. As prophet He proclaimed the Good News that we need not be chained to a life of sin, that we had been freed at Baptism, that we are loved by the Father and invited to share eternal life with Him. As king He is a guiding presence, a grace-presence within us, and when we submit to His guiding presence we belong to the kingdom.

When we offer ourselves to those around us who need healing, reconciliation, care, when we give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, when we actively pursue justice where people thirst for justice, when we give selflessly, we continue Jesus' mission as priest. When we proclaim God's Word by

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Special Survey House Problems Loom For Hatch Measure

The thorniness of the Hatch Amendment issue is reflected in the fact that only 17 of New York State's 39 members of Congress responded to the Courier-Journal survey asking if they will support the bill when it reaches the House of Representatives. And three of the respondents are still undecided at this early juncture.

Among the 17 respondents, however, 11 said they will not support the amendment which may indicate that the proposal, already facing a tough Senate fight, will have a difficult time in the House.

Three announced Hatch support and three others are still taking a wait and see attitude.

The Hatch Amendment would allow both Congress and the states to enact legislation against abortion, the stricter law prevailing. It would hold that abortion is not a constitutional right.

The amendment must be approved by two thirds of each house of Congress and by three quarters of the states.

The amendment has won the support of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and in January Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a pastoral letter declaring that the Hatch Amendment "respects Catholic moral principles concerning life and asked

diocesan backing for the measure.

The national Right to Life Committee also has endorsed the proposal.

The amendment has passed the Senate Judiciary Committee, 10-7, and now faces a full floor debate in the upper house. If it passes the Senate, it will proceed to the House.

The two U.S. senators from New York are split on the amendment; Alfonse D'Amato for and Daniel P. Moynihan against because he "doesn't believe that the constitutional amendment approach" is the best method, a spokesman for his office told the Courier-Journal in January.

The complexity of the issue is evidenced by the fact that opposition comes from two widely separated camps. For instance, Rep. John LeBoutillier of the 6th District, who describes himself as a pro-lifer, said, "I oppose the passage of the amendment because I fear it will allow the states to pass pro-abortion

legislation. I was elected with the support of the Right to Life Party and am, therefore, pro-life. I do not think that passing of the Hatch Amendment will end abortions — rather, I fear, that it will preclude passage of a tough, across-the-board pro-life legislation such as the Dornan-Helms Human Life Bill, which I support."

Joining LeBoutillier in opposition but not in ideology is Theodore S. Weiss of the 20th District.

"I believe," Weiss declared, "that the Roe v. Wade decision should mark the last word on the difficult and painful issue of abortion. The decision recognized that the right of individuals to be free from unreasonable and unwarranted governmental interference in their personal lives applies to abortion, as it does to other individual liberties. Moreover, as experience painfully teaches us, a constitutional amendment does not prevent abortion; it

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Peter J. Schmitt To Be Ordained

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will preside at ordination rites for Rev. Mr. Peter J. Schmitt, 7:30 p.m., Friday, March 6, at St. John of Rochester Church where he is serving as deacon intern.

The son of John J. and Betty A. Schmitt of St. Boniface Parish has chosen a text from Micah, "Yahweh asks only this, do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with your God," as the theme of the ordination.

A reception will follow the rites at Arena's Burgundy Basin Inn.

The ordinand schooled at St. Boniface, Ellwanger-Barry, George H. Thomas grade schools, at McQuaid Jesuit High School, St. John Fisher College and St. Bernard's Seminary, where he took masters degrees in theology and divinity.

In addition, he has served as youth director at Mt. Carmel Church; studied Spanish at Vega Alta, Puerto Rico, worked at the Office of Liturgy, took Clinical Pastoral Education at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York City, and served as a parish staffer at Corpus Christi Church.

Deacon Schmitt has also worked as a porter and as a

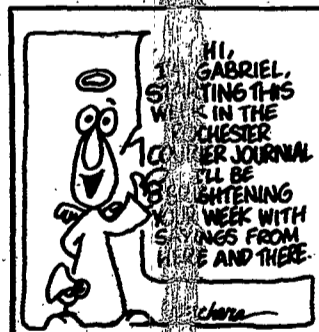


Father Schmitt

cook at Highland Hospital, as an orderly and as a floor supervisor at The Shire at Culverton, as a gas station attendant, as administrative secretary of and community coordinator for Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry.

In 1973, Deacon Schmitt spent several months in the then Rochester-based mission of San Jose Obrero in La Paz, Bolivia.

Following his ordination, he will celebrate Masses of Thanksgiving at various sites: at 5 p.m., Saturday, March 27, at St. Boniface; at noon, March 28, at St. John of Rochester; and at 11 a.m., April 4, at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.



Gabriel's Here!

Gabriel, the creation of Rochester artist John Kuchera, has arrived in the Courier-Journal just in time to note his feast day being celebrated today.

Kuchera collects sayings "from there, here and everywhere" and uses his "friendly little angel" to bring them to our readers.

Gabriel may be found on Page 17 today.