

City, County Officials Gather for Red Mass

The traditional Red Mass, sponsored by the St. Thomas More Lawyers Guild, was held Sept. 14 at Old St. Mary's Church downtown.

The Mass, celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, was well-attended by attorneys and law enforcement officials, as well as members of the public.

Local judges from Supreme Court, County Court and City Court were members of the honor guard which preceded Bishop Clark into the church. Flag bearers from the City Fire Department, County Sheriff's Department and the City Police headed the entrance procession.

Among the participants in the Mass, attorneys Sharon Kehoe and Marilyn Hoffman acted as lay readers; attorney Alexander Bradshaw served as deacon; and County Sheriff Andrew Meloni and City Police Chief Delmar Leach recited the Prayers of the Faithful.

Father Albert Shamon, pastor of St. Mary's

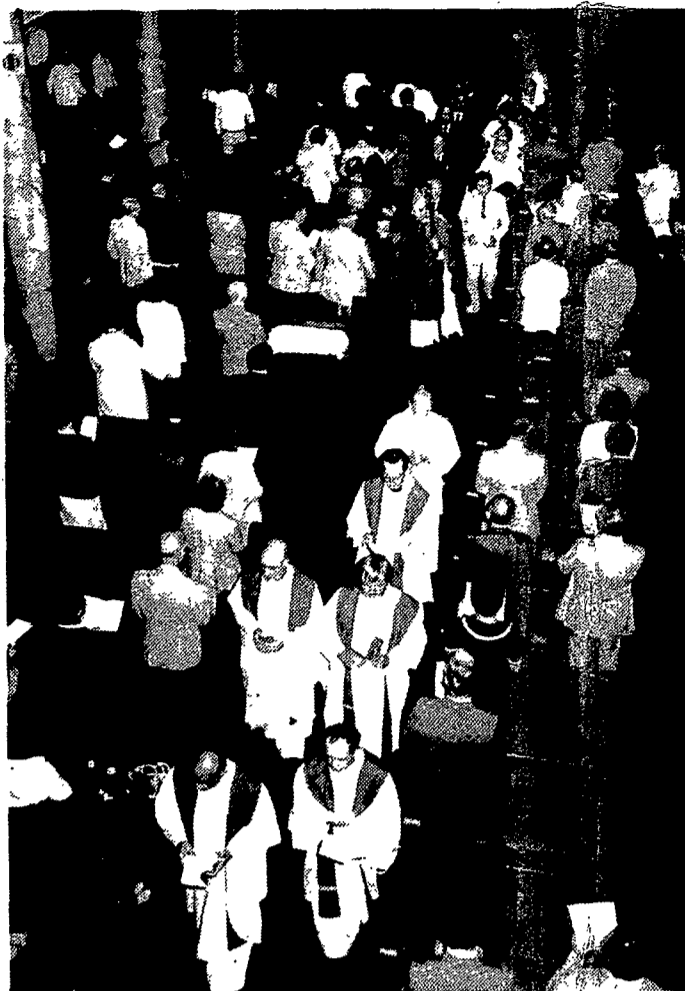
Church, Waterloo, delivered the homily, which he entitled "The Higher Law."

He stated that the Moral Law, or universal norm of morality, "is applicable to all peoples of all times and places."

Father Shamon proclaimed that the Supreme Court "may presume to declare abortion legal, but that doesn't make it right, anymore than the Dred Scott decision made slavery right."

Father Shamon also strongly defended the teaching role of the bishops. He quoted Bishop James W. Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, that the Catholic hierarchy should "join the public policy debate by defining the moral principles that should guide political behavior with particular emphasis on abortion and nuclear war."

Following the Mass, a reception for Bishop Clark was held at St. Mary's rectory.



Bishop Matthew H. Clark greets people as the Red Mass procession leaves the church.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Brothers And Aliens

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 22/34-40. (R1) Ex. 22/20-26. (R2) 1 Thes. 1/5-10.

One bitterly cold and icy night, the telephone rang and called a man out of a nice, warm bed. The caller was the man's brother; he was stranded in town because his car wouldn't start. The caller commented, "It's nice to have a brother in town. You wouldn't dare ask anyone else out on a night like this." He was right. However reluctant we might be to get dressed and go out on a cold, wintry night, we don't leave a brother stranded somewhere.

If we are children of God, however, then all of His other children also have such a claim upon us, and we don't leave any of our brothers and sisters stranded anywhere. Sunday's readings say two things: one, aliens are not to be molested or oppressed (R1); and, two, one's neighbor is to be loved as oneself (R3).

Who are the aliens molested and oppressed among us today? In addition to all minorities, migrant workers, exploited laborers, the list can include the poor, the elderly, the aged in nursing homes, the retarded, the divorced or separated, immigrants from foreign lands, the jobless, ex-cons. . . the list is long and could include just about everyone of us at some point of our lives. Oppression — whether political, economic or religious — rests upon any and all of us at some point of our life.

Oppression, through bigotry or neglect, has no place in Church or in our life. Compassion is the opposite of oppression. Compassion is a form of neighbor-love. The word for neighbor, in Latin, is "proximus," "the one nearest one." Neighbor means anyone with whom one comes into contact. Anyone, I say, outside of friends, family and spouse — for the bonds of

friendship are limited by qualifications not everyone can have. Neighbor-love extends to everyone who is vulnerable to suffering, weakness or sin — things all of us have in common with every other human being. Compassion is based on our common humanity — the realization that we are all aliens to some degree and at some time.

Once Egypt had Israel by the throat and pressed the advantage to the ultimate, exploiting the energy of Israel for her own profit. Israel cried out to God for deliverance. And God intervened, not on the side of the powerful, but on the side of the poor and needy, precisely because He is compassionate — "I am compassionate." The Hebrew word for compassion here implies genuine concern which prompts one to give a favor that cannot be returned. Because God is like that, He heard Israel's cry and delivered her from oppression. When Israel in turn had grown powerful and had the helpless by the throat — the alien, the widow, the orphan, the destitute — God warned her not to act like Egypt, but to act like Himself, compassionately.

The divine model is for us all, God's people. If we, God's people, understand the nature of God — that He is compassionate — then we ourselves must also be compassionate, regardless of laws or customs to the contrary, on the penalty of otherwise ceasing to be God's people. If God has clearly announced — and He has — that He cares for the helpless, then God's people cannot be any different without ceasing to be His people.

The new Israel is the Church. Once we were aliens, but God has delivered us through no work of our own, but because He is compassionate. And because He is, so must we also be toward all others — especially the weak and the needy.

Nuns Group Favors Choice on Abortion

Chicago(NC) -- A group of Catholic nuns has issued a 16-point statement accusing American bishops of sexism on abortion.

The National Coalition of American Nuns, based in Chicago, issued its statement favoring abortion rights Oct. 8 following a weekend meet-

ing in Racine, Wis.

The coalition, representing 2,000 of the nation's more than 100,000 nuns, criticized "sexism which leads the bishops to believe that they alone have the right and wisdom to make decisions about the morality" of a woman's right to decide the outcome of her pregnancy

"when that choice differs from their theoretical one."

"We reject the attitude which denies personhood to the woman and bestows it on the fetus," the statement added.

Sister Margaret Traxler, a School Sister of Notre Dame and former chairwoman for the coalition, said in an interview Oct. 12, "How can someone suggest that only men can discuss women's bodies?"

As women and as voters concerned about the issues, the members of the conference felt compelled to release the statement, Sister Traxler said.

Sister Traxler said the 24-member executive board, including five "prominent" theologians unnamed for fear

of losing their jobs, proposed the document.

The statement opposed "any legislation which would remove the choice about pregnancy" from the woman and questioned why "there is so little mention of incest and rape. These are crimes which often result in pregnancy."

According to 1980 government figures, only 65 of the 33,625 abortions claimed under the Medicaid program were based on rape or incest.

When asked about the Medicaid figures, Sister Traxler said, "I don't believe that."

Instead, she cited a doctor who told her one third of abortions performed at Cook County Hospital in Chicago were the result of rape or incest.

Pa. Doctor Charged In Death of Infant

Philadelphia (NC) -- A Philadelphia doctor has been charged with murder for allegedly failing to treat a baby girl who survived an abortion and telling other doctors not to try to resuscitate the infant.

Dr. Joseph L. Melnick, 62, surrendered to police Oct. 4 after a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was charged

with murder, involuntary manslaughter and two violations of the state's Abortion Control Act. The two violations were infanticide and performing an illegal abortion.

The mother, 13-year-old Tina Smith of Philadelphia, was eight months pregnant at the time of the abortion.

According to Philadelphia Dist. Atty. Edward Rendell, there were "eight separate occasions where the baby evidenced clear signs of life. Dr. Melnick ignored these signs of life and did not take any measures to keep the baby alive."

It is believed to be the first time that a physician has been charged with violating the state abortion law.

The charges stem from accounts to authorities that in the 90 minutes following the abortion, Melnick did not try to revive the infant and told other doctors not to try to resuscitate her because she was dead.

Melnick signed the death certificate, listing the cause of death as "respiratory arrest due to or as a consequence of elective abortion."

An autopsy conducted by the Philadelphia medical examiner found the fetus had been carried for 32 weeks and said the cause of death was "deprivation of medical care and immaturity."

Fr. Louis J. Hohman



The Open Window

Some Men Won't Change

The other day, I was talking to a woman who said she read the column on "Irreconcilable Differences," and thought it would be good if I made some comments about men (in particular) who were unwilling to do anything about differences and would not, in any way, allow for help or guidance in overcoming the differences.

I told her that one of the greatest blocks to reconciliation that I had known was the unwillingness on the part of so many men especially to enter into a counseling situation and to get outside help in resolving differences. She also noted that this was not quite so true of young men as it is of older men.

It has indeed been my constant experience that it is more often than not the man who is unwilling to take part in any kind of negotiated reconciliation or counseling. I also think it is quite evident that this problem arises from a macho point of view. It is somehow or other thought to be unmanly to be unable to solve your own problems. I once dealt with a male who had indubitably messed up his life in several different ways. He was indeed in a hopeless situation. I told him that he really needed God in his life and he needed the help of God to

emerge from this situation. He told me that he wanted no part of this because if it was God who helped him out of the situation, then he would not have the satisfaction of knowing that he had done it. That may sound incredible, but it is indeed a fact and it represents the attitude of many males who would "rather do it themselves." Personally, I know of nothing whatsoever which would make men more capable of solving their problems than women. This would be twice as true of matters of the heart. Yet more often than not, men refuse help because they do not want to be found unable to handle their own problems.

I know of no way to solve this problems because to present it in this way to many men would be the same problem as the one we're trying to overcome. It would amount to, "I really don't need your advice. Nor do I need to go to anyone else for help. I can do it myself, thank you." Maybe the only way a change can be brought about is through a society which retreats from this whole macho attitude and this definition of maleness which is so unrealistic. I think that we have come a long way in the last 15 years, but there is still a long way to go. Let's everyone get together on this and define human beings as human beings who sometimes need help desperately and if they will only seek it they will find it.

Handbell Workshop Scheduled

The American Guild of English Handbell Ringers has scheduled a workshop from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 10, at the Browncroft Community Church in Rochester. Mrs. Marilyn Hines of Slippery Rock, Pa. will be the workshop clinician.

The workshop will cover ringing techniques, directing, repertoire, and bell assignments. The emphasis is on newer choirs and techniques for developing handbell choirs.

Registration is \$5 for AGEHR members and \$10 for non-members. Each participant should bring a sack lunch; beverage will be provided.

Further information is available from Wanda M. Callahan (716) 392-3807.

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