

## On the Right Side

with Father Paul J. Cuddy



### Pastures Not Always Green

From a Redemptorist friend:  
 "My Mom thanks you for the little 'Prayers of an Irish Mother'. She recently was mugged, and her pocket book had the little green prayer book from Ireland. My married sister scoffed at it. She is a Fordham graduate."

**Comment:** This Redemptorist is one of the finest priests I know. He is about 40 years old and a beautiful witness to Christ, Our Lady and the Church in his charity, doctrine and zeal. When he finished a retreat in the diocese, I gave him some tokens as he left: Sheen and Basset cassettes, and the little "Prayers of an Irish Mother" for his devout mother. I wonder at the smugness of people like the daughter, who wallow in their education and affect a supercilious pity for simple, unsophisticated devotions of people like her mother. I would wager two-to-one that she reads the National Catholic Reporter, and believes it; and would not cast a glance at Our Sunday Visitor, or the National Review. I found the booklet some years ago in the book rack of the Franciscan Friary in Killarney, opposite the Great Southern Hotel, and was so impressed by this one meditation from Psalm 22, that I have ordered hundreds of the booklets. You can get a copy from me by sending \$1.00 and a self-addressed envelope. As the mother reads the psalm about green pastures and pleasant waters, she ponders: "That's not where I land!" Yet she expresses utter confidence in the Providence and Goodness of God. Here is the meditation:

**The Lord Is My Shepherd**  
 He hath led me in a place of pasture.  
 Not always so. Sometimes He  
 Who knoweth best, in kindness  
 leadeth me  
 In weary ways, where heavy shadows be;  
 Out of the sunshine into the darkest night.  
 I oft would faint with sorrow and affright  
 Only for this — I know He holds  
 my hand.  
 So whether in a green or desert land  
 I trust Him, though I do not understand.  
 And by still waters?  
 No, not always so.  
 Oft times the heavy tempests  
 round me blow,  
 And o'er my soul the waves  
 and billows go,  
 But when the storm beats loudest  
 and I cry  
 Aloud for help, the Master standeth by  
 And whispers to my soul: "Lo, it is I!"  
 Above the tempest wild I hear Him say:  
 "Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day.  
 In every path of thine I lead the way."  
 So whether on the hill-top high and fair  
 I dwell, or in the sunless valley where  
 The shadows lie — what matter? He  
 is there.  
 Yes, more than this. Where'er the  
 pathway lead,  
 He gives to me no helpless broken reed,  
 But His own Hand, sufficient  
 for my need.  
 So where'er He leadeth I can safely go;  
 And in the blest hereafter I shall know  
 Why, in His wisdom, He hath led me so.

## A Word for Sunday

with Father Albert Shamon



**Sunday's Readings:** (R3) Mark 4:26-34; (R1) Ezekiel 17:22-24; (R2) 2 Corinthians 5:6-10

An allegory and two parables comprise this Sunday's first and third readings. Both passages teach that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will." And because there is, we ought to dismiss worry and anxiety. After we have done our best — sown the seed — the rest is in the hands of God who will see that the harvest comes.

The beautifully poetic passage of Ezekiel depicts that power of God in respect to the promise of a Messiah. That promise of God was the seed planted in the hearts of His people for centuries. When the Jews were languishing in the Babylonian Captivity, they began to doubt if ever the seed would fructify. Ezekiel strove to buoy their hopes with his allegory. "The crest of the cedar" will be cut as a seedling and planted on the mountaintop of Jerusalem. Since the royal palace was built of cedar, the allusion is to some offspring of Jehoiachin in the future — a son of David. Through him, Judah shall become "a majestic cedar ... birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it." Judah, then in exile in Babylon, will become a land of refuge to the nations. The high tree, Babylon or the other empires humiliating the Jews, will be brought low; whereas the lowly tree, the Jews, will be lifted high. All the other trees of the field — the onlooking nations — will know that it is the Lord who has done this: "They said among the nations, The Lord has done great things for them." (Psalms 126/2.)

The choice of this allegory of the cedar in Ezekiel prefigured the two parables of Jesus in the Gospel — especially the mentality of inevitable growth and the detail of branches nesting the birds of the sky.

Jesus' first parable about the seed growing to harvest was probably His response to a growing mood of impatience and even discouragement on the part of His disciples. Although His ministry had met with hindrances and had produced no spectacular results, yet the seed was being sown. The disciples, therefore, need not be anxious. After the farmer has sown the seed, he does nothing. The growing is left to God, whose power is manifest in the laws of nature. The lesson is that His disciples ought to model themselves on the farmer. In a word, they were to dismiss anxiety. The seed is being sown, the harvest will come — but in God's own good time.

The second parable contrasts the size of the seed sown with the size of the shrub that springs from it. So the seemingly small beginnings of Jesus' ministry — inadequate in the minds of the disciples for the coming reign of God — will produce spectacular results. As a small seed yields a big result, so His small beginnings would lead to a big end.

When we look at the newspapers and read the news — mostly bad — we are liable to conclude our world is a place of war, crime, violence, terrorism, injustice and so on. Archbishop Sheen once asked journalists: "Why don't you be like the evangelists and report good news?" But no, we hear of baby battering and wife beating, but not of the parents who love and make sacrifices for their kids or the husbands who really care for their wives. The silent but powerful struggle of those who live their lives for the welfare and growth of others is often ignored and goes by unnoticed. The parables of the reign of God teach us to be aware of the presence of good in our midst. They teach us hope that the good, no matter how small, will eventually triumph over the evil. Our Lady promised at Fatima: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."

## Sheen Foundation Reviews Progress at Annual Meeting

By Teresa A. Parsons

Never have so few accomplished so much with so little recognition. That was one description of the efforts celebrated at the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation's annual meeting on Monday, June 3. Foundation trustees Episcopal Bishop William G. Burrill and Bishop Matthew H. Clark, and members of the foundation gathered at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Henrietta to recognize the 1985-86 board of directors and officers.

Preceding the foundation's meeting and supper at 5 p.m. was an afternoon of workshops providing information on state and federal housing programs. More than 60 individuals representing area agencies and officials plus interested individuals worked to develop strategies for organizing a local network to act on housing issues.

Leading workshops were board members Tom Carey; Karen Noble Hanson of Wilmore and Lee Beaulac of the Rural New York Farmworkers Opportunities, Inc.; Father Donald Sakano of the National Conference of Catholic Charities; and several state and local officials.

Calling the foundation's 17th year one of "unprecedented growth and excitement," outgoing Board President Karen Noble Hanson cited the employment of the foundation's first full-time executive director, Allyn Smith, and a rural housing specialist as important milestones, and thanked both the trustees and volunteer board members for their support.

The foundation, established in 1968, is the result of a 1981 merger between the Catholic and Episcopal diocesan housing programs. Administrative support is funded by the state Division of Housing and Community Re-

newal while all programs are funded by contributions.

In a presentation to the foundation's trustees, Father Sakano compared the worst conditions in rural and urban housing stock to the results of an attack by an invading nation.

"What could be more basic to human life than decent housing?" he asked, noting that religious communities are obliged to assert housing as a right. Specifically he urged that the vast network of church-committed people be activated to affect public policy and stop the federal retreat from housing programs.

New officers of the board elected at Monday's meeting were Gilbert Veconi, president, and Mark Greisberger, vice president. Re-elected were Victor Hadeed, vice president; Rosemarie Horvath, secretary; and Edward Short, treasurer. One new member, Marcia Boyd, joined the board.

Progress in the foundation's ability to stretch resources farther and to identify projects where its support was critical to survival was noted in reports from four standing committees. Board President Gilbert Veconi credited the former to Executive Director Allyn Smith's growing network of organizations which will match funds with the foundation.

Despite its accomplishments in terms of numbers, the foundation's true impact is on an individual basis Carey noted, recalling a couple, aged 74 and 65, who moved into their first home this year thanks to a mortgage from the Farmer's Home Administration. "I was afraid he'd die first," he joked, but added "you should have seen their faces — just beaming."

## Pope Expresses Sympathy, CRS Gives Aid to Bangladesh Victims

By NC News Service

Pope John Paul II expressed "profound sympathy and concern," and Catholic Relief Services pledged an initial \$25,000 in aid after a hurricane and tidal waves killed thousands and left hundreds of thousands of others homeless in Bangladesh.

CRS, headquartered in New York, said its initial commitment of \$25,000 was made to Caritas Bangladesh, a relief agency of the Bangladesh bishops.

Beth Griffin, spokeswoman for CRS, the overseas aid agency of the U.S. bishops, said the agency also would be sending a survey team to assess possible additional responses to the disaster.

"Our hearts go out to the thousands of families who lost their loved ones and all their earthly possessions," said Lawrence A. Pezzullo, CRS executive director. "We are proud to be able to offer them comfort, and we urge others to join us."

CRS said its involvement in Bangladesh and its relationship with Caritas Bangladesh dates from 1972, when the nation won its independence from Pakistan. In the ensuing civil war, CRS said, it provided food and clothing for millions afflicted by the violence.

In the Vatican telegram to the papal

representative in Dacca, the capital of Bangladesh, Cardinal Casaroli said the pope had prayed for the deceased and asked God "to sustain and comfort" the injured, those mourning the death of loved ones, and the suffering.

The pope "prays that those in need will be assisted by an effective outpouring of solidarity and good will," Cardinal Casaroli added.

CRS said donations for its Bangladesh effort can be sent to CRS Bangladesh Emergency, P.O. Box 2045, Church Street Station, New York, N.Y., 10008.

### YOUTH MINISTER WANTED

The Religious Education Board (REB) of Good Shepherd Church in Henrietta is looking for a person to coordinate youth activities in the parish. This person should be willing to continue to work with the present group of teenagers who regularly attend meetings as well as be responsible for program development. The person selected to become Youth Minister should be a committed and mature adult with some experience in working with youth and young adults. A small stipend will be provided. Please call the Good Shepherd Rectory at 334-3518 by June 15, 1985 if you would like any further information or to express your interest in becoming our Youth Minister. Thank you.



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