

Victor Bartolotta Jr.

A Closer Look



Shelters and government's role

Is the average American as valuable as government officials are? Probably not, according to the Reagan administration, which last week discussed plans to build shelters to protect government officials from nuclear attacks but mentioned no plans to protect the rest of the population.

According to Samuel A. Speck, associate director of Federal Emergency Management, the purpose of protecting only government officials is to ensure that after a nuclear attack there will be enough officials around to reconstruct the government. Speck says it is not that the administration is unconcerned with the common folk, but that expediting a new government is necessary because government's job is to "protect first lives and second property."

Speck is only mimicking the Reagan administration's philosophy on the function of government, which, simply put, is to protect property and the citizens who own it. This notion of government is sharply at odds with what the Church has taught, especially over the last 100 years, through the encyclicals of the popes.

It is not important to me that the Reagan administration wants to build shelters only for government officials. This is not important to me because I view any hope for survival after nuclear attack as a frolic with absurdity. If there is a nuclear war, I hope I do not survive, and I wish a similar fate for my family and friends.

That the Reagan administration is willing to entertain the possibility of survival after nuclear war represents, in my mind, a kind of philosophical materialism. By that, I mean that the administration's notion of survival after nuclear attack appears to be rooted in a belief and faith in the things of this life and not in those of the next.

I think that the administration might reason something like this: "If there is a way to hang on to this life at any cost — if survival after a nuclear war is possible — let's try."

Yet for the Reagan administration, surviving a nuclear attack may mean more than just merely remaining alive. It may also mean an attempt to re-establish a life similar to what once was. And what but a life of prosperity and affluence does the Reagan administration currently experience and symbolize?

It would not be difficult, then, to see why the administration would be interested in preserving a government that primarily protects property. Indeed, President Reagan and his friends appear to enjoy the better things in life. The "good life" that the president lives and symbolizes is guaranteed by the kind of government he perpetuates. Moreover, a government that places the protection of property as primary to its mission guarantees that people of higher socio-economic status — of which the president is a part — will continue to enjoy their possessions without outside interference.

The Church, on the other hand, advocates that everyone, not just the rich, has a right to enjoy the essentials of life and that those essentials ought to be safeguarded by government. The Church teaches that government functions best when it promotes the good of all. That notion is the practical antithesis of that espoused by the president and his administration. In fact, I have never heard anyone from the administration even hint that government ought to promote the common good.

It is important to mention here that the Church has always respected the right of individuals to own property as long as the property is used in a socially responsible way.

Building bomb shelters only for government officials is just another predictable step for an administration that has aligned itself with the wealthy. Building bomb shelters for government officials is the impractical but logical outgrowth of the narrow and exclusive ethic from which it stems. It is, however, neither just nor Christian.

Father Albert Shamon

A Word for Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 16:12-15; (R1) Proverbs 8:22-31; (R2) Romans 5:1-5.

A customer asked a clerk in a Buena Park, California, store for Hanukkah cards. "We only sell Hallmark," the clerk replied.

After a sermon with a little Bible geography in it, one of the parishioners at the door thanked the minister for his fine homily, adding, "I always thought Dan and Beersheba were husband and wife — just like Sodom and Gomorrah."

Perhaps we might discover a similar lack of knowledge regarding one of the great mysteries of our faith — the Most Holy Trinity.

The word "trinity" does not occur in the Bible. The word means "three in one" — a tri-unity. The Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) focused attention on the Trinity by declaring the divinity of Jesus as the Word of God made flesh. "I and the Father are one," said Jesus.

The Council explained this oneness to mean that both possess the same divine nature. In the Greek, they used the word *homoousion*, meaning the same nature. Well, that sparked so many controversies in the next 50 years that our so-called dissensions after Vatican II would look anemic in comparison.

Theologians split into two groups: the Homoiousians and Hypostaseians. It was known as the Nicene crisis. The Homoiousians debated on the question of "one and the same nature;" they held to three distinct persons in the Godhead, but failed to maintain with sufficient energy the numerical unity of the nature of God. Their preference for "like" instead of "same" nature would logically lead to Tritheism — three gods.

The Hypostaseians, on the contrary, insisting on the unity of the divine nature, saw only one hypostasis or person in God — a person who is called "Father" as creator (R1) "Son" as redeemer (R2), and "Holy Spirit" as sanctifier (R3), differently named according to the various manifestations of His works. This is modalism — one God having three modes of operation.

Into this melee, God raised up and sent the great Cappadocian Fathers: St. Basil; his brother, St. Gregory Nyssa; and their

dearest friend, St. Gregory Nazianzus. The Cappadocians resolved the Trinitarian question by accepting the *homoousia* (same nature) so dear to the West and the three *hypostases* (persons) so dear to the East. St. Gregory Nazianzus compressed the whole teaching in his crisp formula: "The Three are one in divinity and the One is three in the persons."

Then came the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.).

The two St. Gregorys steered the council toward reaffirming the position of the Council of Nicea regarding the divinity of Christ, and moved it a step forward to define the divinity of the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) put the finishing touches on the doctrine by stating that in the one God there are three persons, equal and distinct, possessing the same divine nature.

A familiar analogy to illustrate the mystery is that of the egg: the egg has three parts — a shell, the white and the yolk — yet all three are one egg. The little finger has three joints, yet it is one finger.

The best comparison, however, is that of the family, which has many persons: the father (image of God the Father), the mother (image of God the Holy Spirit) and the child or children (image of God the Son); and still the family is but one family.

So who is God? God is a community of three divine persons — each unique, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit — yet all are one.

We are made in the image and likeness of God. He is one yet three. He is community and persons. Thus in all of us there is a double drive: we want to be with others and still we want to be ourselves. We are by nature social — it is not good for man to be alone. And yet we are unique — no two persons are exactly alike, anymore than are our fingerprints.

When we are social we are enriched, for we can love and be loved, share and receive, give and be forgiven. When we are ourselves, fully human, then we enrich society, for each of us has something that no one else in the world has to give.

Without us, the symphony of life would be diminished. To be one for all and all for one is truly to emulate God.

The New Code of Canon Law

The people of God: The parish community

(In this series of articles on the Revised Code, Father Kevin McKenna describes some of the changes in Church structures, both diocesan and parish, that have resulted from the most recent Canon Law revision of 1983.)

Ask any Roman Catholic what comes to mind when he or she hears the word "Church," and the answer is likely to be a story about parish experiences. Most of us treasure memories of First Communion processions and sacramental experiences that showed us that a church was more than a building — it was, uniquely "God's Home." The Catholic Church has always been aware of the importance of the parish church, since this is where Church members come into contact with the sacraments of grace and nourishment. The Revised Code gives this most important parish structure as many tools as it needs to carry out its mission for the Church.

A significant difference between the Revised Code and the Code of 1917 is

reflected in respective definitions of what it means to be a "parish." The emphasis in the old code was almost exclusively on "territory." As one canonist describes it, the parish was a territory "with people attached." Boundaries were extremely important and sometimes ethnically determined, with boundary-crossing rarely tolerated.

The Code of 1983 takes a new slant, very much conditioned by the Second Vatican Council. The primary aspect of the parish becomes not territory but *community*: "a parish is a certain community of Christ's faithful, stably established within a particular Church... (Canon 515, 1)."

In a world in which many people are in need of a sense of "belonging" and welcome, this new emphasis in the code has important ramifications.

Although the practical way to determine the location of a parish is still territorial, the pastor is charged by the law to make sure that parishioners are

made to feel at home in the Church. Parishioners must also be made aware that they have a mission to fulfill in that community, to help bring about its growth (Canon 529, 2). The bishop may now create "personal" parishes (after consultation with the Priests' Council) based on language, rite, nationality or some other feature that underscores the Church's appreciation for maintaining some natural communities that facilitate pastoral care.

The primary responsibility for pastoral care is given to the pastor of each parish. In the fulfillment of his responsibilities, the pastor participates in the ministry of the bishop (Canon 515, 1). Rather than accentuate administrative responsibilities, the Code places much more emphasis upon the pastor's sacramental-pastoral leadership. He proclaims clearly the Word of God and assembles the community to be nurtured by the Eucharist, the center of parish life. Specially committed to the pastor are the administration of bap-

tism, the anointing of the sick, and assistance at marriages and funerals.

The present canons articulate strongly a teaching and sanctifying role for the pastor, so that the individual members of the parish feel that they are a part of the diocese and universal Church. Perhaps the greatest challenge to pastors and all who share in pastoral care is making the parish community the unique communion that will remain a sign to all of the compassionate, and comforting Christ — a community where no one feels excluded.

(Next week: "The Parish and Pastoral Care — new options in the Revised Code.")

Nobel nominee visits diocese

Bishop Leonidas Proano, a candidate for the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, will visit Rochester on Memorial Day, Monday, May 26.

Known as "the evangelist of non-violence," the 76-year-old Ecuadorian bishop is also a noted poet, journalist, orator and supporter of human rights in Latin America. The retired bishop of the Diocese of Riobamba, he was last year named the

Bishop of the Indians by Pope John Paul II.

While in Rochester, the bishop will have breakfast with members of the Hispanic Pastor's Association and the Spanish Action Coalition at St. Bernard's Institute, and will later march with the peace contingent of the Memorial Day Parade.

During the afternoon, he will attend a picnic with parishioners of St. Paul's and St. Rita's churches in Webster and with other members of the Webster Council of Churches.

Bishop Proano is visiting the United States to speak at conferences in New York and Washington, D.C.

Women's retreat offered

A retreat for women entitled "Come Follow Me ..." will be offered at the Notre Dame Retreat House, Canandaigua, Friday through Sunday, June 6-8. The retreat focuses on belonging to the Lord and using one's gifts for the care of His people.

For information and registration, write the retreat house at P.O. Box 342, Canandaigua, N.Y., 14424, or call (716)394-5700.

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