

Father Albert Shamon

# A Word for Sunday



**Sunday Readings: (R3) Matthew 5:1-12; (R1) Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; (R2) 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.**

During the disruption caused by the Roman invasion and conquest of the Holy Land (66-70 A.D.), the Pharisees founded a school at Jamnia, to take measures to ensure the survival of the Jewish religion and way of life. But the school at Jamnia did more: it attacked Christianity and all Jewish Christians.

In response to this persecution mounted by the school, Matthew wrote his gospel. He insisted that Jesus was the new Moses; the Church, the new Israel; and Peter, the new chief rabbi.

Thus Matthew hints that the infancy of Jesus paralleled that of Moses: Herod sought to kill Jesus just as Pharaoh sought to kill Moses. Moses came out of Egypt; so does Jesus.

The Torah of Moses was divided into five parts, so Matthew divided his gospel into five discourses. Each discourse is introduced by a narrative that leads up to the material treated in the discourse.

This effort to draw a parallel between Jesus and Moses explains why Matthew situated on a mountain-top our Lord's first discourse, the Sermon on the Mount. St. Luke locates it on a plain. Matthew chooses a mountain site, because Moses gave the old law from a mountain-top; and, for Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount was the giving of the new law.

The law given on the mountain to Moses comprised the Ten Commandments; the introduction to the new law, given in the sermon, begins with 10 sentences (Matthew 5:2-13).

Just as Moses effected the freedom of the Hebrews from slavery through 10 plagues, so the new Moses, Jesus, works 10 miracles, which Matthew narrates right after the Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 8 and 9).

What Matthew was telling the Jews of Jamnia, loud and clear, was that the Jewish Christians were not the apostates from Judaism, but rather the Jews of Jamnia. For Christ was the prophet whose coming Moses had foretold (Deuteronomy 18:15; John 6:14; Acts 3:22); and the Church He founded was the new Israel. The Jews of Jamnia, not the Jewish Christians, were the first Protestants.

The beatitudes that begin the Sermon on the Mount are bombshells: they turn the values of the world upside-down.

Many of the beatitudes are attitudes. Many of them are actions. But all of them are the products of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit — they are the fruits of the gifts, the result of God's direct action through us. That explains why it is impossible for us to emulate the saints on our own.

Once a sister at the convent of Nevers in France tried to imitate the humility of St. Bernadette. The imitator gave up after a few weeks; she couldn't do it. For St. Bernadette was acting through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and so was able to act in ways far above and beyond the limits of human endeavor. This is the key to the lives of the saints, the secret of their sanctity and achievements — God acting in and through them. "Awesome is God . . . he gives power and strength to his people" (Psalms 68:36).

The actions and attitudes that result from the gifts of the Holy Spirit operating in us are called "beatitudes," because they make us happy. St. Francis de Sales wrote that "a sad saint is a sorry saint." And indeed he or she is. For if one is a "sad sack," one does not have the beatitudes; and if one does not have the beatitudes, one cannot be much of a saint, for such a one is not operating under the Holy Spirit.

St. Matthew placed the beatitudes at the beginning of our Lord's life — whereas generally we begin at the end. If we were going on a trip, is not our destination the first thing we think of and yet the last thing we arrive at? So Matthew put the beatitudes first in our Lord's public life, to teach us that happiness is the goal of the Christian life, and that following Christ is the path to it.

Because following Christ means carrying a cross, Matthew included an eighth beatitude among the other seven: namely, the suffering of persecution. "Blest are those persecuted for holiness' sake, the reign of God is theirs."

Happiness comes through bearing the crosses of life for Christ: to Easter Alleluia by way of the cross of Good Friday.

The mark of the Christian is suffering. The goal of Christianity is happiness.

## CHD grants now available for groups with aid projects

Application materials for 1987 grants from the Campaign for Human Development (CHD) of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester are now available. Eligible to apply for funds are groups working to alleviate poverty through innovative approaches aimed at effecting institutional change. Currently, only requests for up to \$10,000 will be considered.

CHD provides funds for projects that enable people of all races, creeds, geographic regions and backgrounds to work together for long-range solutions to poverty.

All groups interested in applying to the Campaign for Human Development are required to submit a pre-application form by February 20. Applicants who meet the minimum criteria must submit a full application by April 20.

For pre-application forms and criteria contact: Christopher Grannis, SSJ, Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry, 110 Exchange St., Geneva, 14456, or call (315) 789-2686;

Christine Wagner, SSJ, Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, 14604 or call (716) 546-4894; or Kathy Dubel, Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry, 160 High St., Elmira, 14901 or call (607) 734-9784.

## Renowned educator to speak at dinner for Catholic schools

A dinner celebrating Catholic Schools Week will take place on February 6 at the Mapledale Party House in Rochester.

The prime rib dinner costs \$15 per person. A cash bar will be open at 6:30 p.m., followed by the dinner at 7:30 p.m.


Entertainment will be provided by the Nazareth Academy Show Choir. The speaker for the evening will be renowned educator Dr. Elinor Ford. Dr. Ford is a former Catholic school superintendent and a professor at Fordham University.

Tickets are available at all Catholic schools in the diocese.

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**SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR OLDER MEN**



# Obituaries

## Robert D. Smett, 61, former C-J news editor

Robert D. Smett, a teacher, playwright, actor and journalist, died in Rochester on December 26, 1986, following a long illness.

Described by friends and fellow thespians as "a true Renaissance man," Mr. Smett wrote a theater column for the Courier-Journal, for which he served as news editor from 1961 to 1967, and helped to found the local theater troupe that eventually became Blackfriars. A former Basilian who once taught for two years at a Marist mission in Samoa, he is remembered fondly by family and friends as a man of extraordinary and wide-ranging talents.

Robert Smett was born March 9, 1925, in Rochester. After his graduation from Aquinas Institute, Mr. Smett attended St. Michael's College in Toronto, Ontario, where he and a group of friends organized a dramatic society called St. Malachy's Guild. During this period, Mr. Smett entered the Basilian order, attaining the level of scholastic before his graduation from St. Michael's. He left the order in 1949 after six years.

Soon after his return to Rochester, Mr. Smett joined the drama group at Nazareth College where, from the mid-'40s through the '50s, he played a variety of leading roles. In 1951, after visiting Father Urban Nagle, director of Blackfriars in New York City, Mr. Smett followed the priest's advice, returning to Rochester to co-found the Catholic Theatre of Rochester with a group of friends that included retired community theater director Wilford Scott and the former Sister Helen Daniel (now Jean Loughery), once head of the speech and drama department and later, president of Nazareth College.

Mr. Smett joined the staff of the Courier-Journal in 1952, writing a regular theater column and eventually becoming news editor. In 1954, he founded the Rochester chapter of the National Catholic Theatre Conference, serving as vice president of the national organization, and editing Catholic Theatre magazine from 1956 to 1963, the year Catholic Theatre of Rochester was renamed Blackfriars. Mr. Smett also founded Drama Critique, a scholastic drama magazine published by the conference, and organized an annual drama festival and periodic play festivals at area Catholic high schools and colleges.

Mr. Smett wrote and produced several original plays, including *Appointment at Noon*, which won a number of drama awards, according to Wilford Scott. During the early 1950s, Mr. Smett also produced three live, televised plays for RAETA (Rochester Area Educational Television Association), the precursor to Channel 21.

In 1966, Mr. Smett was married to the former Joan Stein at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice, Italy, following the example of his aunt; Euphemia Van Renssalaer Wyatt, who was actress Jane Wyatt's mother and who wrote a column for the Courier-Journal some years ago. In 1967, Mr. Smett left the Courier to teach for two years in Samoa with his wife. After their return to Rochester, he taught 7th- and 8th-grade English and religion at St. Michael's and Our Lady of Good Counsel schools.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Smett is survived by his sister, Sister M. Cyril, SSJ; his sister-in-law, Jean Smett; and several nieces, nephews and grandnieces.

## Mary Buckley Donnelly, St. Louis parishioner

Mary Buckley Donnelly, a parishioner of St. Louis Parish in Pittsford since 1956 and a Rochester-area resident for 43 years, died January 15, 1987, at the age of 83. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the church on Saturday, January 17.

Mrs. Donnelly, a graduate of the Buffalo Normal School, taught school in Buffalo for several years. After her marriage in 1931, she moved to Warsaw in Wyoming County, where she served as a member of the Warsaw School Board. In addition to her activities with the school, Mrs. Donnelly was president of the Catholic Women's Club.

After moving to Rochester in 1943, she became active in St. Monica's Parish. There she raised five daughters and instilled in them her strong beliefs in the value of a good education.

In 1956, she moved to Pittsford and joined St. Louis parish. She was an avid reader as well as an excellent cook, seamstress and homemaker.

Mrs. Donnelly is survived by her husband of 56 years, Charles W. Donnelly; five daughters — Helene McGrady, Mary Ann Daley and Jane Merkle, all of Williamsville, Karen Hans of Rochester and Susan Murphy of Massachusetts — and 14 grandchildren.

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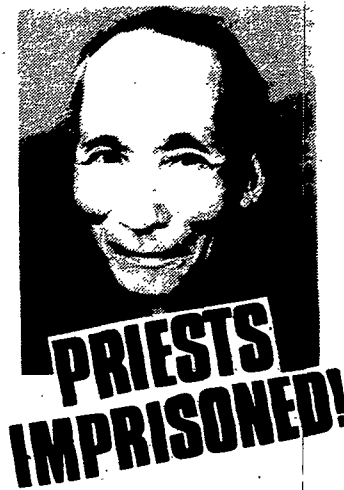
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## Will You Help?

Dozens of elderly priests like Father Thomas Tao are still imprisoned in the People's Republic of China. Now in their 70's and 80's, these brave men have been jailed for the past 30 years.

Their only "crime" is to be devout Christians in a land where atheism rules with an iron fist.

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