

Father Albert Shamon

A Word for Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 6:24-34; (R1) Isaiah 49:14-15; (R2) 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.

This past January, I concelebrated the funeral Mass of Beulah Danahy, the sister of Sister Agnes Paula, SSJ, at St. Aloysius, Auburn. Father Conrad Sundholm was the homilist. Of the many consoling things he said, one thought lingered with me.

He said that Beulah in death gave greater witness to her faith than anyone else in the parish community.

Then Father Sundholm went on to explain. Often, he said, we cannot see the forest for the trees. Similarly, we can lose sight of the purpose of life, just by living. The days, the weeks, the months, the years — like so many trees — can conceal from us the real purpose of life. Time can be so much with us that it can swallow up eternity for us.

But the death of a loved one, like Beulah, gives us pause and becomes an urgent reminder that we have not here a lasting city.

Jesus was trying to teach the same lesson in Sunday's gospel. He cautioned us not to let our day-in and day-out living — the fight and hunt that is life — crowd out the purpose of life.

Eve Merriam tersely reflected that it can: "There go the grownups / To the office, / To the store. / Subway rush, / Traffic crush; / Hurry, scurry, / Worry, flurry." And the result? "No wonder / Grownups / Don't grow up / any more."

So our Lord insisted that we all must stop worrying over such questions as "What are we to eat, or what are we to drink . . . to wear?"

Most of us would respond, "Oh, sure! Who's going to pay the bills?"

Our Lord did not say, "Stop working!" He said, "Stop worrying! Don't be excessively anxious about your livelihood. Don't let the stress and strain of living take over. Do your best, and God your Father will do the rest."

Fill the water pots; He'll change the water into wine. Sow the seeds; He'll make them sprout. Work hard; He'll see you through.

ing over a city at noon. Seeing the hurry, scurry and worry of the people in the noonday rush, the two birds engaged in the following exchange:

Robin, I would like to know

Why those human beings Rush about and worry so?

Sparrow, I think that it must be They have no heavenly Father Such as cares for you and me.

And that so often is our trouble. We do not budget our lives on divine providence. Christ said, "Can a mother forget her infant? Even should she forget, I will never forget you" (R1).

Once, when I was pastor of St. Patrick's in Victor, N.Y., I got a birdfeeder. I bought 50 pounds of sunflower seed. It was gone in three days. I finally gave up feeding birds, because I couldn't keep up with the demand. Even to this day, I wonder, "How does God do it?" I couldn't feed just a handful of birds in my back yard. Yet He feeds them all the world over. Amazing!

If God feeds and clothes the lilies of the field, the birds of the air and the short-lived grass, how much more us!

There is a providence, a "divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will!"

Unable to continue his studies at Yale, William Cullen Bryant turned to law, though his heart was bent on a literary career. Forlorn and desolate, he walked from Cummington to Plainfield, Massachusetts, where he hoped to start his practice.

It was a winter's evening, but the western heavens were fired with warmth. The lone walker lifted his eyes and was glad, for he felt a kinship with a solitary bird winging its way homeward across the pathless sky. In Bryant's troubled breast there gradually settled a calm confidence in the providence of God.

When he reached home, Bryant wrote his lovely poem, "To A Waterfowl."

There is a Power whose care Teaches thy way along that pathless coast —

The desert and illimitable air — Lone wandering, but not lost.

He who, from zone to zone, Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight, In the long way that I must tread alone, Will lead my steps aright.

On our coins we stamp "In God We Trust." That is all we need to do!

Homeless

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tribute \$4,000 worth of staff time and also help the task force with data analysis.

As early as last June, task force members began informal discussions with city officials about funding for the study. In November, several task force members met with Mayor Thomas P. Ryan to personally request his support for the study. He and members of his staff cited several areas of concern: namely, that the county would supply services rather than dollars for the study; that the United Way and several other foundations declined to support the study; that a 70 percent vacancy rate had been reported in some shelter facilities; and that by supporting the study, the city might be obligated to implement its recommendations.

Donald Pryor, director of the Center for Governmental Research, said last Friday that he had submitted a formal proposal for \$5,000 to city officials earlier in the week. He expected that proposal to take a month or more for processing.

In the meantime, Pryor said that he is willing to begin the study, based on indications he has received from city officials and on a total of \$5,500 in additional funds that have already been committed.

Those other funds include more than \$2,000 raised by a letter sent to Monroe County pastors. The appeal to parishes was the brainchild of Father William Trott, pastor at St. Augustine's Church, who signed the letter along with Father Robert Werth of St. Bridget's Parish. In response, dozens of parishes and prayer groups sent donations ranging from \$100 to \$500. Additional contributions to the study included \$1,200 from the Jewish Community Foundation of the Jewish Community Federation, \$525 from the Mental Health Association, \$1,500 in individual contributions sent to the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry for the parish shelter network, and \$275 from three local businesses.

Mental Health Association officials sent letters to more than 200 local corporations, asking them to support the study, according to Pat Woods, program director. Ragu Foods Incorporated, Davenport Machine Tool Division and Caldwell manufacturing were the only local companies that responded with donations.

"We did pretty well, considering we just sent out a letter and not a formal proposal," Woods said. "We figured, 'What have we got to lose?'"

The Center for Governmental Research has already begun to collect preliminary information about homelessness in other locales, including Syracuse, Schenectady, Westchester County and San Diego County. Research staff members are also reviewing earlier studies that relate to homelessness, among them a 1982 report from the Monroe County Convening on the Homeless and a 1983 Housing Council report on single-room occupancy housing.

"Essentially, we are going to start next week," Pryor said on Friday, February 20. "The key thing will be to get good data on the homeless by interviewing at shelters."

A subcommittee of the Mental Health Association task force has begun to develop questions for a survey of homeless people. To help minimize costs and at the same time ensure sensitivity to homeless people, research center staff members will recruit and train volunteers from among shelter workers to conduct the interviews.

Pryor expects to finish the study by late summer or early fall. Along with the data it collects, the study should include some recommendations that the Mental Health task force will present to policy makers and community leaders for further discussion.

"The church shelters are filled just about every night, and they say they aren't sure how much longer they can go on," Father Trott observed. "A study kind of turns everybody off — I know it does me — but sometimes it's necessary to convince officials of the needs that are out there. I see it as kind of an investment in getting help from the city or from wherever else we can."

Marcel Marceau to perform at Nazareth Arts Center

Marcel Marceau, who is acclaimed as the world's greatest living pantomimist, will perform at the Nazareth Arts Center on Saturday, March 7, at 8 p.m.

The program will feature some of Marceau's most famous routines, including "Walking against the Wind," "The Cage" and the character of "Bip."

Tickets are \$22 and are available at the Nazareth box office. Mastercard and VISA orders are being accepted over the telephone at (716)586-2420. The Nazareth Arts Center and box office are located on the campus of Nazareth College, 4245 East Ave., Rochester. Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Contact the box office for information.

Essay contest for students sponsored by Pro-Life group

The Pro-Life Group of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish is sponsoring an essay contest for Monroe County high school students, offering a first prize of \$200 and awards of \$75 and \$25 for second and third prizes, respectively. Each entrant may select a topic reflecting one of the following four themes: "When is it Life?" "Abortion: History Repeating Itself?" "Personally, I'm Opposed, But . . ." and "It's My Body, Isn't

It?" Essay entries will be judged on the basis of clarity, correctness, persuasiveness, originality of expression and conformity with the teaching of the Church.

Guidelines and an explanation of the topics may be obtained by calling Greg Sampson at (716)342-3146. Contest deadline is March 31.

Obituary

Jane Laragy Walsh, 65, Legion of Mary member

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Jane Laragy Walsh by Father Jay Walsh, CSB, on Monday, February 16, at St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport. Mrs. Walsh died of cancer in Highland Hospital on Friday, February 13, 1987. She was 65 years old.

An active member of the Daily Mass League and the Legion of Mary, Mrs. Walsh was a secretary while a legionary at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Rochester. She was also past president of the Nazareth Academy Alumnae Association.

Mrs. Walsh recently retired from the

customs department of Eastman Kodak after 40 years of service.

Concelebrants of the Mass were Father Robert Winterkorn, Father Robert Donovan, Monsignor Richard K. Burns and Father John J. Philipps.

She is survived by her husband, Donald R. Walsh; her mother, Isabel Ochs Laragy; two sisters, Mary Murphy and Norma Waters; two brothers, William and James Laragy; a brother-in-law, Father Jay Walsh, CSB, of Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada; and her mother-in-law, Irene Donovan Weis.

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