

Stallings presents stereotype demeaning to blacks

By Father Paul J. Cuddy
Courier columnist

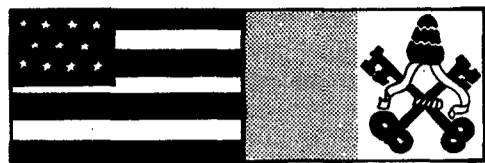
Q.: What do you think of the Father Stallings affair?

A.: You mean the Washington black priest who is starting another sect? Once baptized, one can never be unbaptized. And "once a priest, always a priest." The mark of the priesthood is a great responsibility. To betray it is an awesome thing.

Q.: But doesn't Father Stallings claim he is not exactly leaving the Catholic Church?

A.: He claims he holds the doctrines and sacraments which the church teaches. He just wants a ritual which goes along with his claimed Afro-American sentiments. I watched him on TV as he strutted about the platform while celebrating Mass, sashaying about like an old time minstrel show end-man, bellowing out racist declarations, and deliberately murdering the English language as if illiterate English were a key to communication with Negroes.

I think the NAACP once got the revival of Amos and Andy show off the radio,



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

considering the program as demeaning stereotypes of Negroes. Father Stallings really presents a stereotype which should offend Negroes and rational whites. The KKK could make hay from his antics.

Q.: What do you mean?

A.: Since the civil rights marches and consequent legislation for equality, Negroes as a class have made wonderful advances: economically, educationally, socially, certainly politically. When the Reverend Jesse Jackson addresses meetings, he doesn't horse around like a clown, bellowing outlandish gibberish and mas-

sacring the English language. He acts with intelligence and dignity, giving a rightful esteem for black people. The delightful Cosby show has top billing

The problem, it seems to me, is not of color, but what William F. Buckley calls "the human condition." The "human condition" means the results of original sin, which is in every human person. These are the seven capital sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, gluttony and sloth. Judging from the newspapers, covetousness or avarice seems to be leading the pack today, regardless of color or race.

Church history is full of dreadful things derived from prejudice, not just of color, but especially ethnicity. Whatever threatens power, social position, possession or traditions becomes the object of prejudice which, thanks to the "human condition," subverts reason and genuine religion.

Q.: Well, what of Father Stallings?

A.: He's so eaten up with prejudice against "whitey" that he is willing to sa-

crifice his priesthood, separate himself from his bishop and our Holy Father, and separate himself and some followers to set up a sect of his own based on color and his so-called "Afro-American culture."

Father Paul Agyei, a black priest who is rector of a minor seminary in Ghana, assisted at St. Ambrose, Rochester, for two months in the summer. I discussed the Father Stallings affair with him. He expressed the opinion that "Afro-American Culture" is a misnomer. Black Americans may have a black culture, but it is American, not African.

God knows that Negroes have been shamefully treated even within the church, and equity has not yet arrived. But great progress has been made, and will continue to be made. Former Secretary of Education William Bennett recommends in his book list: *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington. I read it 65 years ago, and recommend the book to our youth to realize what progress has been made from times past.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

is angry with the world and with us in particular. We, His own, who have the faith, who know the consequences of this life on earth, so often sit back complacently like Dives. We eat, we drink, we luxuriate — all the while we ignore the Lazaruses covered with the sores of sin that lead to hell, and do nothing by way of prayer and sacrifices to bring them back to God and eternal happiness. Father, forgive us, we know not what we do.

Money stampedes souls down luxurious road to hell

By Father Albert J. Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 16:19-31; (R1) Amos 6:1, 4-7; (R2) 1 Timothy 6:11-16.

In the *Odyssey* of Homer, two perils threatened the wandering Odysseus: the shoals and quicksand off the coast of Africa, and the Sirens off the coast of Italy. The quicksand and the Sirens that threaten us in our spiritual journey are one: money. Love of money destroyed Judas and Ananias; St. Paul warned Timothy that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

I was amazed to discover just how much time Scripture devotes to the topic of the right use of money.

The first prophet whose sermons were put into writing was a "social reformer." Amos around 750 B.C. fulminated against social injustice. He cried out, "Woe to you rich." Why? "Because they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph!" In other words, they lacked compassion for the poor.

What will happen to them? When Assyria invades Israel, guess who'll suffer first? The rich and prosperous. "They shall be the first to go into exile" (R1).

Then Paul, in his letter to Timothy, concludes with an exhortation "to seek after integrity, piety, faith, love ..." not after money, as did the false teachers of the Gospel (9-10). "Tell the rich," he wrote, "not to rely on so uncertain a thing as wealth but rather on God ..." (17).

St. Luke devotes the entire 16th chapter of his Gospel (with the exception of verses 14-18) to the right use of money. He begins

the chapter with a parable "A rich man ..." (last Sunday's Gospel), and ends it with a parable "There was a rich man ..." (this Sunday's Gospel).

St. Jerome called the rich man of the Gospel "Dives," the Latin word for "riches" or "rich man." Every day Dives dressed in purple and fine linen. Tyrian purple and Egyptian linen were the costliest clothing available at the time, worn only by the richest and greatest. Each day Dives dined sumptuously — a glutton!

In sharp contrast, there lay "at his door a poor man named Lazarus." From malnutrition, his body was covered with sores. He would have been content with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table — the pieces of bread used to wipe a plate or one's hands, which were then tossed under the table. The dogs ate these scraps; they, unlike Dives, noticed Lazarus.

Then both Dives and Lazarus died. There was a reversal of roles. Angels carry Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, a symbol of the eternal banquet of paradise, where Lazarus is given a place of honor — the bosom of Abraham. Dives, on the contrary, is buried in deepest hell.

Death destroys neither memory nor relationships. Dives calls Abraham "father" and Abraham speaks of Dives as "my child," but too late! Dives now recognizes Lazarus. Used to being waited upon, Dives asks that Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his lips. But God is now deaf to him who was deaf to his fellowman on earth. Dives suffered in hell, not for what he did on earth, but for what he did not do.

One of the weaknesses in modern cate-

chetics and preaching is the avoidance of the topic of hell. We are told we ought to be Catholic, but we are never told about the consequences of not practicing our faith. We are seldom made to realize that not to follow Christ is to follow the anti-Christ; not to follow His way to happiness is to follow your way to hell. There's no middle road.

Hell is no figment of a fanatical imagination. It is eternal. It is eternal torment. Dante wrote over the gates of hell: "Abandon all hope ye who enter here."

Oh-so-many souls are going pell-mell to hell and we are standing by and doing nothing to stop the stampede. That is why God

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