

'Weaseling shepherds' impede a Catholic's loyalty

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier Columnist

This letter offers the dilemma of a man who wants to be loyal to the church but is impeded by weaseling shepherds.

"I am a pre-Vatican II Catholic who totally disagrees with Father McBrien and his ilk, and who is having a hard time adjusting to the goings-on in the Diocese of Rochester. Frankly, I wonder at times if this diocese is still in communion with Rome."

He continued, "Recent events have made a particularly bad time for me. It began with lay people delivering the homily in my parish church, and progressed through a communion service on Thursday conducted by a woman who referred to God in her homily as 'she.'"

Comment: Father McBrien would surely disclaim any disloyalty to the Church, but he does seem to be in constant contestation against Roman direction.

So do some of our parish bulletins. One prize was the Feb. 19 Corpus Christi (Rochester) bulletin, which exulted: "We rejoice over the consecration of

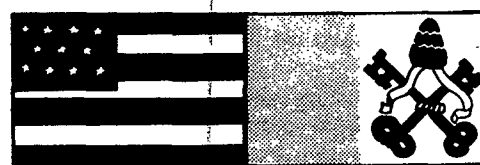
the first woman bishop of the Episcopal Church, Rev. Barbara Harris. Our Episcopalian brothers and sisters are leading the way, recognizing God's call in women. Meanwhile our Roman Church continues its sin of discrimination against them. How about sending Bishop Harris our congratulations and prayers? There will be a card to sign after the Masses this weekend."

We do, however, have to be careful lest we find disagreements which are not necessarily disloyalties. Not all areas are black or white. It's the gray areas that cause most contention.

Rome has long been protective of preaching, and allowed only those in Holy Orders — priests and deacons — to preach. There has been a relaxation so lay people, who are expert in some field are given the pulpit.

A member of the parish finance committee, for example, might explain the parish budget. A retreatant might explain retreats. And I doubt that anyone would object to Mother Teresa giving a Sunday homily.

Yet the story of the camel's nose under the tent can quite apply, wherein the pulpit



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

becomes the forum for those who have no place there.

When a woman takes the pulpit, twists language and "those things handed down" to inject perverted feminism, it's time for good Catholics to stand up and be counted.

When the priest does the same, it's time to question his theology. I have the greatest sympathy for parishioners who are subjected to this mean imposition of twisted theology and upside-down rhetoric.

I do not know what to suggest to offended parishioners except to find a parish where normalcy and fidelity to the church is the rule.

These will give you the mind of the Holy

See: *L'Osservatore Romano*, Daughters of St. Paul, 2105 Ontario St., Cleveland, Ohio, 44415 (airmail weekly, \$55); *The Pope Speaks*, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 200 Noll Plaza, Huntingdon, Ind., 46750; *30 Days*, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 6718, Syracuse, N.Y., 13217 (initial subscription, \$29.95).

30 Days is my own favorite. A year ago I sent a subscription to the well-known lawyer and pro-life advocate, William Polito of Webster, saying, "This is for Catholics who use their intelligence."

At a recent Knights of Columbus fish fry in Webster, I met him and his wife. He smiled and said, "I just sent in my renewal of *30 Days* for three years." So let us praise the Lord!

These three I would especially recommend for what you want. The Knights of Columbus monthly, *Columbia*, is also good.

You might also read copies of *America*, *Commonweal*, and *National Catholic Reporter* to know what the opposition to the Holy See is up to.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

settled the case in her favor.

Basically, this is a parable of contrast. Our Lord is teaching that if a wicked judge answers a plea, how much more will God — a good judge — hear the prayers of those He loves!

The responsorial refrain reinforces this teaching. It says, "Our help is in the Lord" — not in man; "in the Lord who made heaven and earth." Do you understand that?

Readings outline payoff for persistent prayers

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier Columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 18:1-8; (R1) Exodus 17:8-13; (R2) 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2.

Billy Sunday, the Chicago Cub baseball player-turned evangelist, made it a practice to pray for specific people in a city where he was going to launch a prayer crusade.

Before traveling to Columbus, Ohio, he wrote his customary letter to the mayor, asking for a list of people in the city in need of special prayers.

The mayor sent him the city directory. How true! We all need prayer!

Sunday's readings speak of two qualities necessary for prayer: persistence and confidence (next Sunday will give a third).

In the Gospel parable, St. Luke gives the point of the parable at the beginning, a rarity. "Jesus told a parable on the necessity of praying always and not losing heart."

We are so used to instant mixes, instant tea, instant coffee, and so on, that we tend to get impatient with any delay, even in prayer. We want instant answers.

The obvious lesson of the Moses story is that persistence pays off.

When Moses was leading his people out of Egypt through the desert to Mt. Sinai, God provided water for them from a rock. Water in a desert is more precious than gold.

So the Amalekites, a confederation of tribes roaming over the Sinaitic Peninsula, attacked the Israelites.

Moses watched the battle on the hilltop, but he did more. He raised up his hands,

the traditional posture of prayer. As long as Moses prayed, the battle turned in favor of Israel. But when he stopped praying, the battle favored Amalek.

So Aaron and Hur had Moses sit, and they supported his arms so that he could continue to pray until the battle was won.

This reading praises the dogged perseverance of Moses, just as our Lord praised the dogged determination of the widow in the Gospel. As long as Moses raised his hands in prayer over Israel, God gave Israel the upper hand.

In the Gospel parable, the widow too is persistent in her plea. But the emphasis here is not so much on persistence in

prayer, as it is on confidence in prayer.

The judge in the parable is not a good one. He feared neither God nor man. The widow is the symbol of the most defenseless and oppressed person in the East during the time of our Lord.

Someone, perhaps a rich landowner, was taking advantage of her helplessness. The judge probably wanted to curry favor with the rich man, or he may have been waiting for a bribe from the widow. But she was penniless. Her sole weapon was her persistence.

Finally, the judge, worn out from her persistent pleading and fearing (as in the Greek) that she might give him a black eye,

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— Mark 10:14



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