

Two letters spur sadness over idealism gone astray

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier Columnist

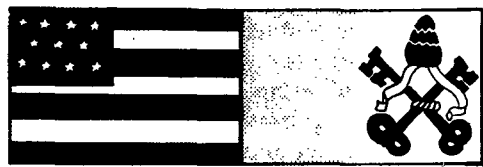
Almost two years ago, I had three altar boys in my car. They were going to assist me during Mass at a Webster nursing home. We were passing the house of a Laotian family, who a few months earlier had won \$10 million in the state lottery.

"Those people used to spend \$26 a week on lottery tickets," I said to them. "Recently, they hit the jackpot of \$10 million. What would you do if you won \$10 million?"

One boy — a sharp eighth grader — answered immediately.

"I would get the biggest, loudest, metal hard-rock band in the world."

The dreadful thing is that he meant it. In fact, two weeks later he went to a rock concert at the War Memorial Auditorium in Rochester. He paid \$25 for a ticket and another \$30 for a T-shirt expressing his devotion to the Unremembered Dead Band (or some such name).



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

The following two letters made me recall my dialogue with the eighth grader in our parish school, and my sadness at idealism gone astray.

A letter came Nov. 6 from Father Joseph Ekpo, who is secretary to Cardinal Dominic Ekanbden in Nigeria.

"Dear Father," he wrote, we know about you through the good sisters working with us in our diocese. We are really touched and thankful for your concern about the church in the Third World, as you asserted in one of your articles in your *Catholic Courier* weekly. You wrote, "Our diocese needs priests. But for more than 60

years I have been zealous for the progress of the church in the Third World."

Recently, the Holy Father appointed His Eminence, as Cardinal Archbishop of the newly created Diocese of Abuja, which is now the Federal Capital Territory. This assignment is very challenging because the Cardinal is going to work in the very enclave of Muslim Communities. The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is very bitter and nothing to write home about.

After a long plea and several applications, however, the government finally allocated some plots of land for the following: a cathedral, hospital, primary school and a handicapped or rehabilitation center. The offer came with a warning that if the cardinal does not develop them as soon as possible, the government would take back the allocated land.

We are appealing to you, your church or institution for financial assistance. If possible, you could contact some other parish-

es, institutions and organizations on our behalf or send their addresses to us. On this matter, no amount of money is too small and none is too big."

Comment: I certainly would not send a list of people to appeal to right now. Our people are appealed to death. But if anyone does want to make a donation (remember "no amount is too small, and none is too big") I will be glad to forward it to the cardinal for what looks like a very difficult task.

A short note came on November 10 with a check for \$1,000 and a note.

"This is a belated recognition of your 81st birthday. Contrary to your nature, I hope you will indulge yourself - spend it as foolishly and as extravagantly as the limited amount permits. For once, skip worthy causes and idealistic projects. But if worthy causes and idealistic projects give you pleasure, so be it. You're the doctor."

Comment: As you place these two letters side by side, what would you do?



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

of the earth, the light of the world, its leaven. That means we are called to work to end selfishness, greed, pride and hate — that we are to create a new people filled with love, humility, generosity, so that at the "end of the world" Christ might be able to present to His almighty Father "a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and peace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace" (Preface) — an end devoutly to be desired, an end for which we must pray and labor.

As the priest changes bread and wine into the physical body and blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, so we — through Holy Communion and the Holy Spirit — must change the bread of humanity into the mystical body of Christ: the Church.

And the Church is a Kingdom of love, peace and joy, where all are bonded into one by the word, and by the Sacrament of Love, Holy Communion, and the God of Love, the Holy Spirit.

How do you see the Second Coming of Our Lord?

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier Columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 23:35-43; (R1) 2 Samuel 5:1-3; (R2) Colossians 1:12-20.

The central mosaic, dominating both sanctuary and nave in the Upper Church of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., is "Christ in Majesty."

Assembled by John Rosen in 1959, it is the largest mosaic of Christ in the world (modeled on older Byzantine traditions.) It depicts Christ coming in judgment, but with arms opened wide, ever making intercession for us before God, the Father.

Part of the inscription inscribed in the arch above the mosaic reads: "Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules ... His Power is an Everlasting Power that shall not be taken away."

This majestic conception of Christ as

King goes back to the apses of ancient Christian basilicas. Up until the Middle Ages, it was the belief of the church that the glorified God-King appears on the throne of the altar during Mass, a sign of His Second Coming.

But during the Middle Ages, the crusades caused a shift to the earthly life of Our Lord. St. Francis of Assisi reinforced this shift by popularizing two events in Our Lord's life. These events — the Infant of Bethlehem in a manger and the Man of Sorrows on a cross — dominated the centuries to follow, even to our own day. Margaret Mary with her devotion to the Sacred Heart further confirmed this shift.

Although the Liturgy reflects the trends of the ages, it never lost sight of Christ as King — radiant, majestic and divine. Thus every prayer ends with Christ who "lives and reigns forever." Advent awaits the coming of the King. Christmas celebrates

the birth of the King of Peace. At Epiphany, Kings come to pay homage to the "king of the Jews."

Lent provides the same emphasis. On Passion Sunday, Jesus is acclaimed as King, Son of David. On Good Friday, above His cross are the words "King of the Jews." A thief asks for a remembrance in his Kingdom (R3). In John's account of the Passion, Our Lord is presented as a King. Finally — to close the church year — the church awaits the return of the King of glory.

So on December 11, 1925, Pope Pius XI established the Feast of Christ the King to renew in our minds and hearts the ancient concept of Christ as King, sitting at the right hand of God the Father and coming one day in power and glory to judge the living and the dead.

How do you envision the Second Coming of Our Lord? Does He come to destroy the world? Is the coming of His Kingdom to be a disaster? Will the world end when God thinks He has put up with enough? He taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven" — on earth!

The Feast of Christ the King invites us to work toward the transformation of this world. Jesus said that we are to be the salt

Christmas cards available through Holy Childhood

Christmas cards designed by students at the School of the Holy Childhood are now available for purchase.

The cards, which are packaged in sets of 12, cost \$5. Proceeds from the sale of the

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