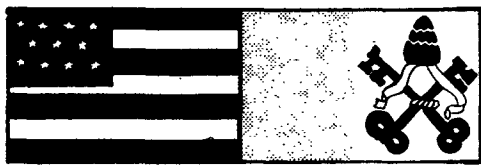


Strong views expressed effectively in quiet manner

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier Columnist

From a militant priest: "Are you losing some of that sock-it-to-them which over the years has given support to those of us who care about the church? There is a civil war within the church, and the left wing has been winning the battle. The pope speaks, Father McBrien and his disciples undercut him. The pro-abortion people have become rabid, and, while the pro-life people are to be admired, they aren't organized to be as effective as the NOW people. The media is almost 100 percent pro-abortion, and politicians on whom we could rely are waffling disgracefully. What do we have in return? Why not get back to sock-it-to-them? Wars are not for the meek.

REPLY: "Your letter sent me to examination of my conscience. Strangely, the first thing that came to my mind was this: Lech Walesa has been for hours on the TV, praised, loved, charming the country. Yet not one commentator has remarked about the medallion of Our Blessed Mother, so



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

conspicuous on his lapel. Why not? The children of light are not much represented either in the TV or print media. And strangely enough, Mother Angelica's EWTN, which is solidly a Catholic channel, is meeting a quiet opposition within the diocese.

"I enjoyed a scene of an elderly lady, who was picketing alone at the Planned Parenthood Clinic in Auburn. Her features were that of a determined, earnest woman with strong feelings about the murder of the unborn. She sat in solitude on a chair in front of the building, holding a sign about four-feet square which read 'SCUM!' Yet I

think Lech Walesa's reply was the greatest boost for pro-life yet delivered. David Broder, the columnist, recorded: "To an exceptionally earnest man, asking his views on freedom of choice and the abortion issue," Walesa replied, "I have eight children. Why don't you follow my example?"

Isn't that socko with a velvet glove? A dozen years ago this column recorded, "If St. Paul were a 35-year-old parish priest today, I think he would be greatly involved not only in parish affairs, but in civic affairs, ecumenical gatherings, in radio and TV programs. And I think he probably would be working hard to become a big bishop." Lest these consideration be misconstrued, let's clarify. The term, '35 years old,' simply indicates that, from 35 to 55, men are usually at their physical, emotional and intellectual prime. They enjoy dynamic energy. Usually from 55 onward, men are less enterprising, more prudent, and frequently wiser and less emotionally charged. They have the benefit of experience. They may spin their wheels

less, but frequently they accomplish more with less motion, less bureaucracy and less emotion. As men grow older, most tend to slow down to a less energetic, less erratic pace, and work less glamorously, more ploddingly. "It is doubtful that St. Paul would be a parish priest very long. He would be a bishop not for his own glory, an ideal he would fault with great contempt, but to be in a position to promote the gospel more effectively. He would surely use TV and radio to spread the gospel 'in season and out of season.'"

So let us thank God for the young with energy — if they are faithful to the teachings of the church and loyal to the pope — and for the oldsters who live more in the twilight, not just dreaming dreams, but quietly steering souls to Our Lord's Kingdom.

And cheers for Lech Walesa who charms the people with his wisdom, his earnestness, his religious faith, and — wonderful to behold — his sense of humor — an attribute which is most effective.

Advent season calls for serious life reflection

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier Columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Matthew 24:37-44; (R1) Isaiah 2:1-5; (R2) Romans 13:11-14.

Advent has a twofold purpose: to prepare for Christmas, the first coming of the Lord; and to prepare for the end of time, His Second Coming in glory. A fine way to prepare is to have a more active, devout and intelligent participation in every Mass, which celebrates His coming now in mystery.

A good start would be to understand the nature of the Advent season. This year the Advent season is as short as it can ever be because the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24, and Christmastime is only 15 days. So we have hardly five weeks to prepare for and celebrate Christmas.

Advent arrives suddenly, without warning, like the first snowfall that changes the entire landscape into a fairyland. It is somehow a slap in the face to bring us to our senses. We must see Advent for what it is — a carefully prescribed antidote to the syrupy sweet December that advertisers have in store for us (pun intended).

The commercial merriment preceding December 25 has nothing at all to do with preparing for Christmas. Advertisers have pirated Christmas symbols — lights, evergreens and music — to sell their wares. We must stop fooling ourselves into thinking that parties, concerts, overindulgence, and anxiety about presents are a proper preparation. Nor is Advent the season for parish parties and socials. They are more appropriate during Christmastime.

Advent is autumn turned into winter, with its slow ebbing daylight, darkness, coldness, threat of starvation, death and

despoiling of the earth; trees now standing like empty vases and the summer glory become, in the words of Shakespeare, "bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang."

These are warnings sharp as the prophets, loud as the Baptist, nagging us to face injustice, suffering, war, the end of life itself. Advent is a call to prepare, a challenge to act.

Isaiah tells us to "beat swords into plowshares;" that is to stop fighting at home, stop hating one another, stop the divisions, dissensions, divorces — first at home and then pray for them to stop between the nations. He tells us to turn "spears into pruning hooks;" that is, to win others to Christ, not by barbed tongues, by giving tit for tat,

by piercing hearts, but by love, kindness, patience and forgiveness. Isaiah pleads, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

In Paul's letter to the Romans, there is a sense of urgency. "Don't dilly-dally," he warns, "the night is far spent — it is later than you think." We must realize that time is precious. It cannot be taken for granted. We do not really know how much time we have left.

Paul continues, "Let us not do things that are sinful, like over-eating, over-drinking, sexual excess, lust, quarreling and jealousy. Let us rather do those things that we should not be ashamed to do in the daylight, before the eyes of everyone else. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" — just as



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

you put on an overcoat to keep you warm and protect yourself against the winter cold.

In the time of Noah, people were totally unconcerned about the things that really mattered. And what happened? They were destroyed! Those not ready will be left for destruction.

Therefore, stay awake! Get out of the rut. Our end will come like a thief in the night — suddenly and unexpectedly. Therefore the clarion call of Advent: "Be prepared. Your salvation depends on it."

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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

**Grief...
is help available?**

Grief is the name of a complex combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual experiences. It occurs when we lose someone or something very important to us.

It is a natural reaction to the realization that we are not all powerful, that we ourselves are mortal.

Everyone deals with grief in a different personal way.

GRIEF RESOURCE INFORMATION FORUM and the PASTORAL CARE CENTER at Rochester General Hospital jointly sponsor a monthly bereavement group called WORKING THROUGH LOSS.

The group provides information, education and peer support for adults recovering from the death of a significant person in their lives.

The group meets the second Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the E-5 conference room at Rochester General Hospital.

Easy-to-follow signs are posted upon entering the hospital from the parking ramp.

Open to all adults. There are no dues or fees. You may attend as long as you choose.

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