

Help for African church more under- than overboard

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

From a faithful reader: "You seem to go overboard about the Church in Africa. Isn't there more than enough work in the States without taking on Africa?"

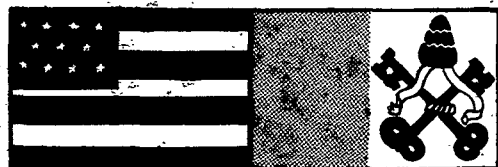
One does not go overboard in giving assistance to a church which is poor, growing, zealous, faithful to the Holy See and the traditions handed down from the Apostles, and developed through the Holy Spirit throughout our 2,000 years. Let's face it, we in the States are closing down churches and schools. We are losing millions of Hispanics and Orientals just like we lost millions of black Catholics throughout the years.

We have some strong Catholic parishes — thanks to faithful parishioners — but we have only a dribble of converts. Although Rob Cullivan had a hopeful feature ("Books cater to many needs") in the June 28 issue of the *Catholic Courier*, we have missed the boat in evangelization through TV and radio. The output in print has been mediocre as well. While Africa has such a plenitude it cannot accept all the candidates who want to become priests or religious, our Catholic youth are unwilling to give glory to God and provide guidance and the sacraments to our people. No, one does not go overboard helping a vital church while the local churches are "underboard."

Here is a letter, dated June 15, from Bishop Raphael Ndingi of the diocese of Nakuru, Kenya:

"Many thanks for your letter of June 1, 1990. Your cheque of \$1,000 is being divided as you request: \$400 for stipend and \$5 each for the donors' intentions. The rest is for our work. My sincerest thanks for the continued prayers and real partnership in our apostolate."

He added, "Your financial assistance just reached us in time. A month ago I



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

received a request from our Little Sisters of St. Francis in Garissa diocese — a desert and a Muslim area — for a fridge. As I was scratching my head and trying to convince the diocesan procurator to give this amount, your cheque came. Our dear sisters can now have a fridge. Garissa is a hot area with a harsh climate. Sisters there

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Matthew 13:1-23; (R1) Romans 8:18-23; (R2) Isaiah 55:10-11.

Matthew saw Jesus as the new Moses. The books of Moses are five in number so Matthew constructed his Gospel on five discourses of Jesus. Sunday's Gospel is from the third discourse, comprising of seven parables of Jesus.

A parable is a short story — taken from everyday life — which is used to demonstrate a single lesson. For instance, the parable of the sower and the seed originally meant this: "As the soil determines the fruitfulness of the seed, so the disposition of one's heart determines the fruitfulness of God's word." Or, "As much seed is wasted in the sowing and yet bears abundant harvest, so God's word will fall on many deaf ears yet there still will be a great harvest." To get at the lesson of the parable, simply use the "as ... so" com-

are catechists, social workers, primary school teachers, and the superior runs a mobile medical clinic. They will pray for you and for those helping you to help us.

"This year we are celebrating a centenary of our faith. Kenya has now three more archbishops — Mombasa, Nyeri and Kisumu. One of our own diocesan priests ordained by me in 1982 was appointed a bishop of Eldoret. He studied here in Kenya (where the late Father Walter Gleason of Phelps taught until his sudden death a few years ago) and then in Maynooth. He was our vocations director. So now we are without one. There is so much work to be done. Every week we have an average of 500-800 for confirmations."

Gospel story functions as parable and allegory



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

parison.

The parable differs from an allegory. An allegory is a short story in which every detail of the tale stands for something. The parable of the sower has probably been allegorized by the early church. Thus, every detail is made to stand for something: the sower for the preacher; the seed for God's word; and the four kinds of soil for the four kinds of people responding to the Word.

Preachers generally use only parables; writers use the allegory because the allegory is a coded story, like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Allegories demand much thought and reflection to decipher their meaning. Hence they lend themselves more to the reader than the listener.

The parable of the sower and the seed is

He concluded his letter by saying, "Greetings to our priests from Kenya — Steve, Ernest, Simon Peter the Maasai priest, the two Pauls, and 'Mrs. X' (a woman who contributed funds to build a beautiful chapel at the pastoral centre). This chapel has the admiration of all who visit our pastoral centre. The centre is booked throughout the year, even some months of 1991. Once again, thanks and God bless you and all those who assist you in your great hearted apostolate."

To our readers I say that as I gaze upon the large refrigerator in our rectory in Auburn and ponder over the needs of the African Church, it seems to me that our American concern for the universal church is more "underboard" than overboard.

perhaps one of the best known of our Lord's parables. The early church favored this parable because it helped explain why so many people in general did not receive our Lord's clear teaching. Christ and the apostles are likened to the sower; the seed, to the Word of God; and the soil, to the listeners.

The single lesson, as we pointed out, is that the soil determines whether or not the seed will be fruitful. In computer jargon, "The receiver controls the input." Or in the language of philosophy: "Whatever is received is received according to the manner of the receiver."

In allegorizing the parable, we can take each detail and draw lessons. The sower is the preachers of God's word. They must have the seed themselves because God's word must first flourish in their own hearts, for no one can give what he does not have. Then, like the farmer, they must sow, even if some of the seed is lost. They must also be patient because it takes a lot of slow to grow.

The seed is God's word. And in the words of Isaiah, "it shall not return to me void ..." No matter how many resist it, there will be a harvest, an "achieving the end for which the word was sent."

The soil is we, the hearers of the Word. We all can become insensitive to God's Word by too many cares. The heavy wagons of earning a living, the dancing feet of pleasure, the thorns of riches, and the envy of the devil — all these can harden the heart or steal the seed and render it sterile. Therefore, it is imperative that we withdraw each day from the hustle and bustle of life, retreat to a prayer corner in the home and ponder a few verses of the Scripture and pray in silence and solitude. This is the plowing needed for the harvest.

One day, Benjamin Franklin received a whisk broom as a gift from India. He noticed a few seeds fastened to the wisps of the broom so he planted them. When the first crop came up, he distributed the seeds among his friends and neighbors. Their crops flourished. By doing this, Franklin introduced broom corn into the American colonies and started the American broom manufacturing industry.

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

What is grief?

Grief is a process of feelings and behaviors which follow the loss of someone or something that we love. The entire process of grieving helps us to come to terms with the changes that have taken place in our lives and begin adjustment to them. This is not always easy and often lasts for a year or more. Some of the feelings that accompany grief are anger, guilt, anxiety, shock, jealousy and depression. It is not uncommon to be confused, restless, to have difficulty sleeping or to have a change in appetite. It takes time to accept the reality that someone we love is deceased. It takes longer to recreate a life that can make us happy.

We purchase all forms of insurance to protect our family & assets, not because we expect the worst to happen, but to be prepared. Doesn't it make sense then to prepare for what will happen. Let our trained counselors assist you with the many options available in planning for a worry-free future.

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