

Catholic periodicals to consider as Christmas gifts

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

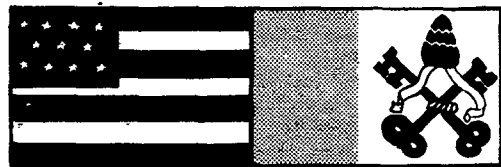
Father Elmer J. Schmidt, pastor of Hornell's St. Ann Church, recently phoned to tell me: "Deacon Bob McCormack and I were thinking about Christmas. We remembered you had an article in the *Catholic Courier* a few years ago, suggesting that people give Catholic magazines and newspapers to friends and relatives for Christmas. Would you send us this article."

I couldn't find the article but I recall that it began: "I have 21 nieces and nephews and 84 great nieces and nephews, and for years I have sent either the *Catholic Digest* or *Our Sunday Visitor* as a Christmas gift from their loving uncle. This suggestion I give to others."

"Both the *Digest* and the *Visitor* are popular everywhere, and each time one comes it is a reminder of their devoted uncle."

Here is a list of Catholic periodicals that I recommend:

• *Catholic Courier* — 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

A friend recently wrote to me: "My only contact with the diocese is from the weekly *Catholic Courier* which I devour with interest."

• *Catholic Digest* — P.O. Box 64090, St. Paul, Minn., 55164.

This is a good family magazine with articles focusing on religious, health and family interests.

• *Columbia* — One Columbus Plaza, P.O. Drawer 1670, New Haven, Conn., 06507.

This is the Knights of Columbus' fraternal magazine with a monthly circulation of more than 1,200,000. It should be read regularly by K of C families.

• *The Priest* — 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, Ind., 46750.

This publication is targeted for priests and deacons. It features good book reviews by Monsignor Charles Dollen, and articles of concern to those in pastoral ministry.

• *30 Days* — Ignatius Press, 2515 McAllister St., San Francisco, Calif., 94111.

This publication is among the best in giving an overview of the universal church. It is internationally coordinated with *30 Days* in Spain, France, Italy, South America and the United States.

The publisher is Jesuit Father Joseph Fessio, who also produces the books from Ignatius press. He is currently at odds with his liberal brother Jesuits on the West coast. *30 Days* is one of the best magazines for intellectual Catholics and non-Catholics.

• *Liguorian* — 1 Liguori Drive, Liguori, Mo. 63057.

This publication provides light reading for families, with a section on humor and book reviews. It is published by the Redemptorists.

• *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* — 86 Riverside Dr., N.Y., 10024.

This publication is excellent for priests, deacons and concerned Catholics. It is firmly loyal to the Holy See and magisterial church. When I was in Hong Kong in 1984, I stopped at a Maryknoll parish and it was reassuring to find the priest reading the *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*.

• *America* — 106 W. 56th St., N.Y., N.Y., 10019.

A Jesuit champion of the Holy See and the magisterial church, *America* was developed when Catholics were more and more becoming professional people. Today, it is a scholarly, sophisticated weekly which often gives excellent articles (and sometimes dubious ones.)

• *National Catholic Register* — 6404 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 900, Los Angeles, Calif., 90048.

This is an excellent middle-of-the-road weekly newspaper.

• *National Catholic Reporter* — P.O. Box 419281, Kansas City, Mo. 64141.

This newspaper is loved by feminists. It is hostile toward the magisterium and a champion of dissidents. Some have expressed surprise that I subscribe to NCR. My reply: "We have to know what the enemy is up to."

• *The Wanderer* — 201 Ohio St., St. Paul, Minn., 55107.

This weekly newspaper is published by lay men who use a cudgel to bring out the message. It is strongly right wing; basically, it is the opposite of NCR.

Whether you subscribe to any of these publications, it is good to be familiar with issues that are influencing the church.

Each person's talents remain useless unless used

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Matthew 25:14-30; (R1) Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6.

The theme of Sunday's readings is talents. Talents are God-given abilities. The Gospel parable tells us that God gives talents to almost everyone. We are richly endowed persons. Each has talents.

God, however, does not give the same talents to everyone. Every person is different. No two fingerprints are alike; no two persons are exactly alike. All have different talents.

God expects us to use our talents even though we may not have the same as other people. The conductor of a symphony expects every musician to play his instrument to the best of his ability. Each instrument — whether it be a violin or a piccolo — is important to the symphony.

We lose our talents if we don't use them. To use our talents, we must follow the three "don'ts."

First, don't make comparisons. So often we do nothing because we say, "If I only had his or her talents ..." What's important is not what role we have in the play, but what we do with what we have.

Edward R. Sill once wrote a short poem entitled "Opportunity." In a dream, the poet saw a furious battle in which men yelled and swords struck against swords and shields. A prince's banner, hemmed by foes, staggered backward. A coward hanging along the battle's edge thought, "Had I



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

a sword of keener steel — that blue blade the king's son bears, but this blunt thing." He broke his sword and threw it from his hand, and crept away from the field.

Then came the king's son, wounded and weaponless, and in great danger. He saw the broken sword in the sand, snatched it up, and with a shout, he cut his enemy down, saving the cause and the day.

So, it is not the talents we have so much as what we do with the talents we do have.

Secondly, do not be afraid of failure. It was said of Thomas Edison that "to him nothing succeeded like failure, because every failure taught him something he didn't know before." He would test and test an experiment until his assistants were ready to drop from sheer exhaustion. He failed more than 5,000 times before discovering how to make the electric light bulb.

He spent five days and nights in his laboratory before discovering the phonograph. He used to say that people called him "The Wizard of Menlo Park," but "genius," he said, "is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration."

Lincoln lost many of his early political

campaigns, yet ultimately won the presidency of the United States. The man in the Gospel lost his talent because he was afraid of failure.

Lastly, don't bury your talents. Talents never spring out fully developed. They need to be developed. This requires blood, sweat and tears. A famous writer once said, "When I was a young man, I observed that nine out of 10 things I did were failures. I didn't want to be a failure, so I did 10 times more work." A diamond is a piece of carbon that stuck it out under terrific pressure.

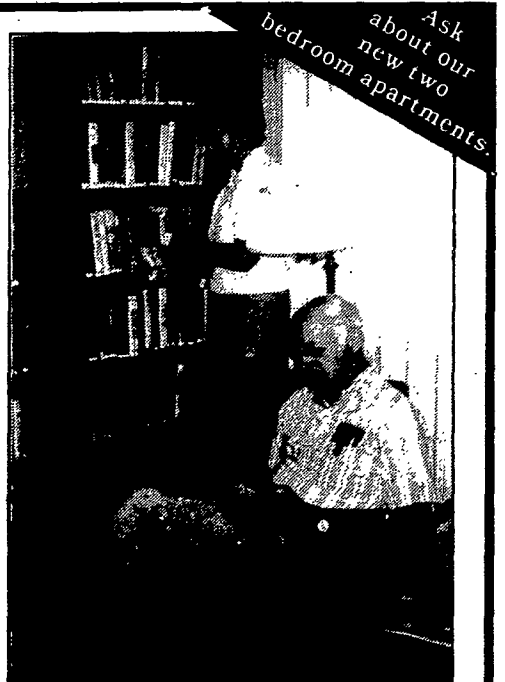
Note that the two men who doubled their five and two talents both got the same reward. The number of talents made no difference to the Lord. They were good and faithful, not because of what they had, but because of what they did. What we are is God's gift to us; but what we become is our gift to God.

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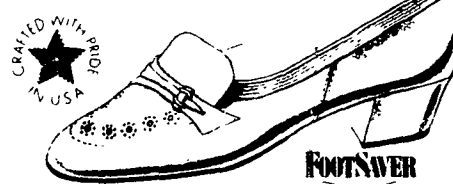
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