

# Catholics must learn to see with 'eyes of the heart'

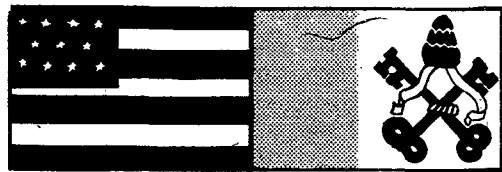
By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

From a puzzled reader: "Enclosed is a check for \$4 for the tape you mentioned in the Oct. 24 *Courier*. It is entitled 'Protestant minister becomes a Catholic.' Several members of my family have joined other churches. I'd certainly like to know why they did."

Reply: Your puzzlement is shared by many. I have pondered over this issue for a long time. This may give part of the solution.

Father Michael Carmola, director of priest personnel for the Syracuse diocese, concluded a mission at Auburn's St. Alphonsus Church with a heartwarming sermon.

He pointed out that we Catholics have



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

keen eyes of the intellect, but too often neglect the eyes of the heart. What did he mean? That we approach religion from the viewpoint of the intellect, set upon truth. But often we are dull about the impact on the emotions of people who look for goodness, compassion, tolerance and love with the eyes of the heart. God is the God of love as well as of truth. To have a complete religion we must see with the eyes of

the heart as well as with the eyes of the intellect.

He illustrated his point with this story: "When I was a little boy my grandfather died. The wake was in the home, and I, a little boy, watched relatives and friends pour in extending their sympathy to my grandmother. Her usual smile was absent. Her face seemed frozen in her grief.

Toward the end of the wake a little boy found the street entered the room. His family was very poor. We children used to make fun of them. The boy was carrying an orange juice can in which he had a bouquet of flowers. He extended it to my grandmother saying: 'We are too poor to buy flowers, so I picked these for your husband. He was always nice to us.'

My grandmother's face lit up. She

hugged the boy, took the can of flowers, set aside a beautiful bouquet at the end of the casket and placed the boy's can of flowers in the place of honor. That boy and my grandmother were seeing with the eyes of the heart."

The attraction toward fundamentalist churches sometimes comes from a genuine eyes of the heart among members, who give a welcome and a sharing in the church. Our Catholic parishes are often so large that they can be impersonal. Members join in unity through the eyes of the intellect. This is no guarantee that the eyes of the heart are functioning.

However, an exaggeration of the eyes of the heart without due regard for the eyes of the intellect would bring a lopsided faith. Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth."

Many Catholics who have left the church for some fundamentalist sect got tripped up through contestations about Bible texts. The falsity of the "Bible only" theory is well explained by Ralph Hahn, former professor of Scripture at a Presbyterian seminary. He sincerely believed the pope was the anti-Christ. His intense study of the Bible, however, convinced him that the Catholic Church is the genuine custodian of God's revelation from the eyes of the intellect.

The story of his conversion is on a cassette, "Minister becomes a Catholic."

I gave a copy to a priest involved in Bible studies. He wrote back to me: "I listened to the conversion tape. It's fascinating! Really great! Magnificent how he demonstrates that *nowhere* does the Bible say that the 'written word' is the 'sole authority,' but that it does speak of the 'unwritten tradition' being an 'authentic source' of faith."

Those who want the cassette can send \$3, plus \$1 in handling charges, to: 10 Lewis St., Auburn, N.Y., 13021.

# Heaven waits for those who treat the needy justly

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Matthew 25:31-46; (R1) Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; (R2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28.

Sunday is the feast of Christ the King. Christ's role as King is that of shepherd (R1) and judge (R3). In the previous two Sundays, Jesus, like a good shepherd, warned us in parables to be prepared for the judgment. On this Sunday, the shepherd sets forth the criterion on which the judgment will be based.

For Matthew, judgment is separation. At night sheep and goats are put into the same pen. The sheep with their woolly coats prefer open air, whereas the thinly clad goats seek warmth by huddling together in pens. In the morning the shepherd calls his sheep, much like a man who whistles for his dog. The sheep separate themselves from the goats. So, at the end of the world, the good and the bad shall be separated eternally.

The sentence of Christ the King is most interesting. To the good, He will say, "Come, ... Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To those on his left, he will say, "Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Note that heaven was prepared for us from the beginning of the world. We were made for heaven and for happiness. Hell was not in the original plan of God. Hell came into existence only after the rebellion of the angels. It was meant only for them, not for us. Fearful to ponder, man can rebel against God as did Lucifer and his fallen angels.

Like a teacher who gives his students the answers to the questions before the exam, Jesus tells us the judgment will be determined by one's answer to the question: "How did you treat your fellowman?" In other words, were you neighborly?

First, Our Lord singled out hungry people, not starving people. We dump enough into our disposals each day to feed a starving world. But hungry people — people



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

hungering for affection and for friendship — have needs of other kinds. Do we ever smile to another, especially when driving?

Secondly, he talked about the thirsting. Not those needing a glass of water because water is everywhere. But people thirsting for truth, for inner peace, for purpose in life. Do we witness to the Gospel by our lives?

Third on the list were strangers. Strangers are people waiting to be found. How many people around us — husbands, wives, children and neighbors — are strangers to us! Do others have to submerge feelings or play games just to get along with you? Do we build walls or bridges? Are we even friendly to people who walk all over us, take advantage of our kind-

ness? After all, doesn't a doormat have "welcome" on it?

Then Our Lord singled out the naked. Not those who have no clothes. Rag dealers are millionaires. But those stripped of security, those shivering from the cold of abandonment or misunderstanding. Do I join the crowd and avoid those everybody else avoids?

Next comes the ill. Do we comfort those in nursing homes by a visit? Or a card? I have five wonderful women who volunteer to help me at the Cayuga Nursing Home each week when I celebrate Mass there. Their presence is much appreciated.

Lastly, Our Lord mentioned the prisoners. Do we pray for them?

This kind of thinking in Matthew's Gospel is not meant to fill us with guilt feelings. Rather, it is meant to open up to us new vistas of how we relate to the needy of the world. Our Lord is saying to us now, "Look at all the people you can help until I come. What you do for the least, you do to Me."

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