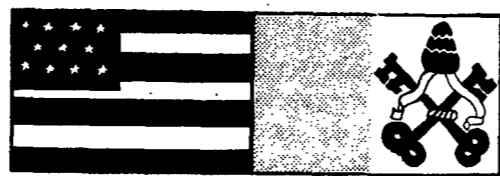


'Do it now' column continues to influence people

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

A while ago a person sent me a large donation for the African missions. I sent the donation to Bishop Camillus A. Etokudoh, who is establishing a new diocese for Nigeria. The bishop is often harassed by Moslems who have no love for Christianity.

Here is his letter thanking me:
"This is to acknowledge with thanks receipt of \$1,100 dollars for our diocese. Deeply appreciating your generosity, I hereby tell you how it has come at a providential time when I needed money for our orphans in our children's home. They are the beneficiaries and their prayers go with



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

you and the kind people who assist us.
"Thanks for sending a copy of the article in the *Catholic Courier* with the memorable message of regretting failure to DO IT NOW! I have reproduced it for my personal meditation, and I am distributing some to my priests and laity."
Comment: When I send a letter to

anyone, I use a long envelope and enclose in the letter a copy of some *On the Right Side* columns that I believe would interest the person. Why? Because it continues the work of evangelization, which is effective in the printed word and cassettes. In addition, I have a great sense of economy, wanting to get the most for my stamp.

Bishop Camillus considered the enclosed article so helpful that he is distributing it to priests and lay people. Thus, the *Catholic Courier* carries its influence in Africa.

This particular article I like especially well. It has jolted me into action many times. And many people have told me, "That DO-IT-NOW slogan really has pushed me into action."

So for your review, here are some excerpts:

"Most of us have occasions of great regret. And I am suffering one now. The newspapers carried the obituary notice of Basilian Father Anthony Lococo who died at the Basilian Fathers' residence in Toronto. He was a priest I have kept in honored memory for 40 years and I have always intended to get to see him. But I never did. Had I followed the adage, DO IT NOW, this awful regret would not hang over me like a brooding spirit. Now I am saddened by this.

Some years ago, I wrote a column entitled "Do It Now!" and I present it to you for your meditation.

Make your will or update the one you have.

Visit the sick or house-bound person. Pay your debts or bills.

Make a needed appointment with the doctor or dentist.

Return borrowed books or tools or other articles.

Invite some friends for lunch or an evening, as you have intended for ages.

Get the plumbing, windows, electricity or whatever fixed.

Write that letter you've neglected.

Make the telephone call which can lighten the heart of another, or mend a fence.

Acknowledge with thanks a gift or a hospitality.

Go to Sunday Mass regularly, and daily Mass if possible.

Quiz the children or grandchildren on their religious knowledge and practices. It is appalling how many children do not know the ordinary prayers, or elementary Christian doctrine.

Write to Bishop Matthew H. Clark about the things you appreciate, or even what you might not, letting him know what you like or regret. He welcomes input from his people."

Job well done gives witness to Jesus' presence

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 1:6-8, 19-28; (R1) Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11; (R2) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24.

Sunday's Gospel has two sections. One describes what John the Evangelist says about John the Baptist. The other tells us what John the Baptist thinks of himself.

John, who wrote the Gospel, puts John the Baptist down. He does this because in his day there were groups of people who still thought that John the Baptist was greater than Jesus.

We must remember that when John the Baptist appeared on the scene, Israel hadn't had a prophet for 400 years. John the Baptist appeared from out of the desert, clothed in camel hair, living on locusts and honey, preaching fire and thunder. In contrast, Jesus arrived meek and humble, clad in a seamless garment made by his mother, looking just like an ordinary man.

Thus, John the Evangelist was very careful to point out again and again that John the Baptist was not the light, but only a witness to the true light.

John the Baptist, however, had no false pretensions about himself. He insisted, "I am not the Messiah. Not I!"

He continued, "Nor Elijah. Nor the prophet promised by Moses. Do you really want to know who I am? I am a herald's voice, crying out 'prepare the way for the



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

Lord. I am a witness — no more!"

And that is precisely the role of the laity today: to be witnesses of the good news of the Gospel.

Several years ago a garbage collector in Dallas, Texas, was honored by the people along his route. Seventeen residents wrote to the Public Works Commissioner, Jack Davis, praising the warm friendly smile and courteous service of their garbage man, George Cummings.

They told of how Cummings had helped buy flowers when someone in the neighborhood died, how he found a watch and contacted everybody on the route to find its owner, and how he would check with people when he found items in the trash that he felt might have been thrown out by mistake.

Davis wrote Cummings a letter with this note: "It is our belief that people achieve stature and importance in all walks of life, regardless of position. Your performance has proven this."

In the Gospel, people asked John the Baptist who he was. What they wanted to know was not his name, but his job. He

told them, "I'm a voice, a witness, telling the world that Christ has come. Get ready." John the Baptist spared no sacrifice to announce Christ.

All of us have a job to do in the kingdom of God — something important, no matter how humble our task might be.

George Cummings realized this, so he made the most of his garbage collecting job. So must we. We must beware of be-moaning our lot, of saying, "Oh, I'm just a housewife" or just a telephone operator, teacher, bus driver, waitress, farmer or cook. Can you picture life without someone performing tasks like these and hundreds of others like them?

Every job is important, if not in some people's eyes, always in God's eyes. Do you think Jesus felt unfulfilled because he grew up a carpenter? It didn't matter what he did, as long as he was doing his best for his father.

The same should be true for ourselves. And the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist are meant to help us. Like John the Baptist, George Cummings and Jesus himself, we need only give our best and in this way also become witnesses to the presence of Jesus in our lives.

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