

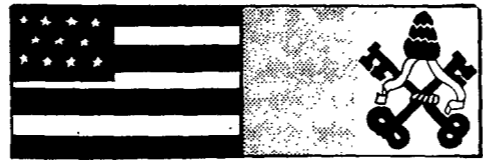
Lottery-winning priest lost his idealism along the way

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

I saw the following squib in the Jan. 24 issue of the *National Catholic Reporter*: "Lottery winner retired Father C.G., 71, of the Diocese of Springfield, Ill., plans to use the \$1 million he recently won to pursue a degree in economics. He told the *Springfield Register* he would not give money to the church because during his first 18 years of priesthood, he never received a raise.

"I gave 40 years of my life to the church, so I don't owe the church anything," he said.

This seems funny because it is in such contradiction to the idealism which probably impelled this man into the priesthood 40 years ago. Then came the gradual discontent which seems to have taken over



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

his soul at a time when he should have been happiest and most zealous.

What a contrast to Father Joseph V. Curtin of Clyde, the first pastor I served under 55 years ago. He held the priesthood in sublime honor. He loved Our Lord with a calm devotion. Father Curtin worked with a plodding zeal to bring a strong faith to his parishioners in Clyde and Lyons. He also had a passionate enthusiasm to spread the faith in distant countries.

When he was a teacher at St. Andrew's Seminary — where I was graduated from before going on to St. Bernard's in 1929 — Father Curtin organized and directed St. Andrew's Mission Society. He always distributed books to his students, especially those pertaining to the missions.

During the years he was pastor in Clyde-Savannah he sent nearly all of his personal income to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and to many individual missions.

At his funeral, Father George Wood, then director of the Propagation of the Faith, told me: "There are more native priests and sisters working in Africa and India, thanks to Father Curtin, than to any priest in the diocese."

Knowing quite well how Father Curtin's mind worked, I once asked him in the spirit

of humor: "Father, what would you do if you got a million dollars?" With a droll smile he replied: "I suppose I would be like everyone else and try to make another million." I knew that rather than trying to make another million, he would be helping to train and educate candidates to be native priests, brothers and sisters in Africa and other countries.

When Father Curtin died, Father Henry Adamski — who served as his assistant for many years — was the executor of his will. Father Adamski had just enough to bury him. Who would doubt that as he went to God his sense of economics surpassed the poor disgruntled cleric who carried a bit of sourness for having served the Lord for 18 years with a raise!

As St. Ignatius put it: "Omnia ad majorem gloriam Dei."

The season of Lent calls on us to recall and prepare for baptism

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Mark 1:12-15; (R1) Genesis 9:8-15; (R2) 1 Peter 3:18-22.

Lent has a twofold character: In addition to recalling baptism and preparing for it, the period stresses a penitential spirit.

The season, which lasts from Ash Wednesday until the evening Mass on Holy Thursday, consists of five Lenten Sundays. The sixth Sunday — known as Palm or Passion Sunday — begins Holy Week. The Alleluia is not used throughout Lent.

The Gospels for the five Sundays of Lent focus on the temptation in the desert, the transfiguration, the cleansing of the temple, the dialogue with Nicodemus, and the "grain of wheat" discourse.

The theme of the first readings are on the covenant: God's covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, then on the covenant broken, and the promise of a new covenant.

Times and places of origin are important. We generally mark the birthplaces of our presidents and commemorate anniversaries such as that of the birth of our independence on July 4, 1776. A key concept between God and his people is that of covenant. Therefore, its origins are of pivotal importance.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

God speaks to Noah about the covenant on four occasions. Unlike the more demanding covenants with Abraham and Moses, his covenant with Noah embraced the whole human race. And for his promise of not destroying the world by flood, God asks practically nothing in return — simply, multiply and don't kill.

In the second reading, Peter teaches that the ark and the flood are symbols of baptism. By baptism, one enters the ark of the church. By the waters of baptism, one is washed clean of sin, as the world was rid of wickedness by the flood. The bow in the clouds symbolized the reconciliation between God and the baptized.

The bow, formed after a storm by the sun shining on raindrops, hence "rainbow," was always seen by the ancients as a symbol of peace between heaven and earth. Thus the Greeks named their goddess of peace, Irene, ("iris" means

"rainbow").

But you may wonder how a bow — a weapon of war — can be a symbol of peace. When the Choctaw Indians made a peace treaty, they handed over a bow to their enemies with the arrow pointed toward themselves. When a gunslinger shows he has no hostile intentions, he hands over his gun to the sheriff, with the barrel pointed toward himself.

Our bow in the clouds is the risen Jesus at the right hand of the Father. At baptism, he sends the Holy Spirit upon us, making peace between the Father and us.

When Jesus was baptized, he was driven by the Holy Spirit — which was given to him at baptism — to go into the desert to be tempted by the devil. Similarly, our baptism is but the beginning of our conflict with the powers of darkness. As pirates used to attack rich cargo ships, so the devil in envy of the spiritual riches given to us at baptism attacks us till death.

St. Dominic once wrote: "The man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either rule them or be ruled by them. It is better to be the hammer than the anvil."



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