

# Book may be music to some ears, but not all

By Father Paul J. Cuddy  
Courier columnist

For many years, Holy Trinity Parish in Webster engaged an organ student from the Eastman School of Music as church organist and director. He stayed on for two years to graduation, then another took his place.

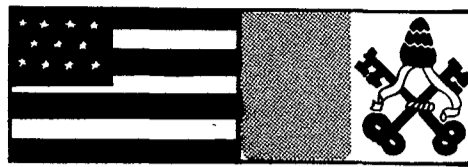
In the fall of 1977 a youthful Tom Crawford came. He was only 20 years old, talented, with a self-confidence and a near-asperity that made me wonder: "Oh, how will he get along with the choir members? He drives them like a drill sergeant." In a few months, however, the members were eating out of his hand, pleased with their own progress and proficiency.

One day Tom asked me about St. Bernard's Seminary. I said: "In earlier days St. Bernard's had two years of philosophy, four years of theology, 230 seminarians and beautiful music. Our training was little directed to social services. Seminarians and faculty lived in a liturgical milieu of Catholic doctrine, music and ritual. SBS today has only four years. The two years of

philosophy are at Becket Hall, and SBS has only 70 students. Add to this the fact that the seminarians are out a great deal, with emphasis on activities, hospitals, economic and social reforms, etc. There is less emphasis on liturgy and music."

With an exasperated snort Tom shot back: "I am not a Catholic, but I do know that the first work of your church and priesthood is liturgy. How can you have that decently if your seminarians are not impressed that their first responsibility is liturgy? That's probably why the street-culture gimmickry has gotten into some of your sanctuaries."

I lost track of Tom until recently, so I wrote to him. He replied with a delightful letter, expressing his pleasure in our reunion. He went on to write: "The Church needs more musicians like me, too, but alas I have had to move the sacred-music work into the background of my life, for economic, integrity, and sanity reasons! I suppose I am a reference case: I'm a persuasive musician whose first love is sacred choral music and liturgy, yet I've had to leave because I can count on one hand the



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

number of places in God's American kingdom where I might be put to good use.

"Instead I enter the secular world full of steam, and end up with an orchestra that attracts the likes of Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma. Not that I don't love Brahms and do it well, but ... Promise me that you'll read a recent book called *Why Catholics Can't Sing* by Thomas Day. It is 90 percent cynicism, 10 percent prescription, and 99.99 percent truth. It is also fun to read. One churchman said: 'We needed this book, had it coming.' Maybe one day I can return to the Church, but for now, I dabble."

# Paul's prophecy in the storm comes true

By Cindy Bassett  
Courier columnist

*The Shipwreck of the Alexandria, as explained by the Captain: Part II.*

As the Alexandria slowly made its way toward Phoenix, farther up the coast of Crete, I had already decided it would be best to winter there. There was no sense in risking 276 lives or our cargo on any foolish attempt to cross the high seas during the storm season.

If the southerly winds continued to direct our course, we would arrive in Phoenix in three days. Even so, the foreboding I had felt about this voyage since we left Egypt remained.

Sleep was impossible with my mind so restless, so I went out on deck in spite of the chilly night air. The only sound came from the waves lapping up on the ship's sides as we cut a path through the sea. I glanced up at the night sky. Not a single star could be seen in the overcast blackness.

An overcast sky meant only one thing: Bad weather was coming soon. We were cruising in the calm that always comes before a storm unleashes its fury.

The winds started before first light. I didn't have to say anything to the crew. They already knew what was happening and made the necessary preparations on deck.

Deep within myself, a nagging thought remained: I should have listened to the prisoner Paul and stayed on at Fair Ha-



vens. But it was too late for recriminations. I had 276 people aboard the Alexandria to concern myself with.

The gale winds reached the intensity of a Northeaster, the most dreaded of all storms on the high seas. All we could do was try to keep the ship from breaking apart from the forces that battered us. For several days, we couldn't even see the sun. We had no course left but to give ourselves and the Alexandria over to the winds that would carry us where we had no wish to go.

Everyone — crew and prisoners alike — was huddled in a common wretchedness below deck for nearly two weeks. No one said much, but we were bonded by the knowledge that death was inevitable.

In the midst of this misery, the prisoner Paul suddenly stood up and addressed us: "Don't worry. We should have stayed on in Fair Havens as I suggested. But, even so, not one of our lives will be lost. I worship Jesus Christ, and as I was praying to him, he told me that only the Alexandria will be destroyed. My Lord will do exactly as he promised."

At first, I thought Paul to be some sort of

madman. But the rest of the passengers and crew seemed to take heart from his words.

A few days later, the winds subsided and the crew informed me we were near land. They measured the water at several intervals and the Alexandria was indeed approaching an unknown shore.

At daylight, we could see a cove and a beach in the distance. We decided to try to run the Alexandria aground on this beach. But before we could do so, the ship struck a hidden shoal. We were buffeted in the rear by strong waves, and the Alexandria started to break up.

"We must swim ashore," I called to everyone. "It is our only hope."

Those who could swim started diving into the icy waters. The rest of the passengers held onto broken planks from the ship and drifted toward shore.

When our ordeal was over, all 276 passengers were safe on the island of Malta. Nothing remained of the Alexandria except the makeshift wooden lifeboats that had carried some of the people to land. Everything occurred just as Paul had said.

Scripture Reference: Acts, Chapter 27:13-44.

Meditation: Jesus, help us to trust you and not lose heart amid the storms of our lives.

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Tom sent a brochure of his "dabbling," an impressive program of the Fairfield Orchestra, 1991-1992, of which he is director.

*Why Catholics Can't Sing* will outrage some: those who use the liturgy as an Ego Trip, (one of the best chapters is entitled "Ego Renewal") those who have injected looney liturgy into some parishes, who have contempt for the musical inheritance of the church, who hate Latin, who use liturgy to obtain or retain power.

But those who honor good and great religious music, who forgo the Ego Trip for the psalm, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your Name give glory," who sincerely honor the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (the very first of the 16 Vatican II documents) the book will be a joy and a consolation.

The first edition printed only 10,000 copies, because it was not thought it would be very popular. That first printing is sold out, and the second is due in September. Many think the book will bring a revolution within the church.

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