

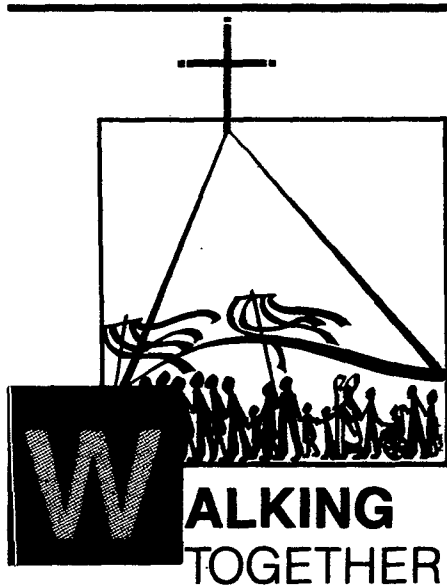
# Recommendations are not last word

By Father Joseph A. Hart  
Guest contributor

A highly respected friend wrote to me recently to question the Synod's treatment of the "prophetic recommendations." These are the recommendations calling for the end of compulsory clerical celibacy and asking for a reconsideration of the ban on the ordination of women to the diaconate and priesthood. More than 50 parishes submitted these recommendations after the fall synod sessions.

Please recall that our Synod's primary purpose is pastoral: to formulate a prioritized plan that will guide our local church into the 21st century. The Synod has committed itself from the outset — through this grass-roots consultation process — to receive any recommendation submitted by a parish or community provided it was voted to be the local community's top priority. As a consequence the process had to deal in some way with those recommendations that could not be implemented locally as part of this prioritized pastoral plan. Hence, the creation of the category "prophetic recommendations."

At October's General Synod, these recommendations will be discussed and then voted on for possible submission to Bishop Matthew H. Clark.



In one way or another, these recommendations will testify to the heartfelt belief of the Church of Rochester.

The discussion of these recommendations at the General Synod disturbs my friend because, according to him, the delegates "have not been provided with the historical and theological bases for the present practices. These are intricate matters, and if theological, scriptural, canonical and historical experts admit them to be so, how can the average Catholic be expected to make a reasoned judgment?"

He is right, of course. If we are

expecting delegates to render a reasoned judgment on matters — canonically, historically and theologically — then we must begin now to educate them in the most intensive way to understand the complexities of the questions involved.

The church is not expecting a reasoned judgment from delegates as if they were experts in these questions, but rather it seeks from them testimony as to their *sense* of the questions. It is not an intellectual judgment that is looked for but a spiritual intuition prompted by the Holy Spirit.

In his work, titled *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, Cardinal John Henry Newman, one of the last century's great theologians, taught that the church's tradition "manifests itself variously at various times: sometimes by the mouth of the episcopacy, sometimes by the doctors, sometimes by the people, sometimes by liturgies, rites, ceremonies, and customs, by events, disputes, movements ... It follows that none of these channels of tradition may be treated with disrespect; granting at the same time fully, that the gift of discerning, discriminating, defining, promulgating, and enforcing any portion of that tradition resides solely in the *Ecclesia docens* (the teaching Church)."

The purpose of the "prophetic rec-

ommendations" is not to be the last word on the questions. Rather it is to be our word on the question. We understand that we are only one local Church, which is joined in faith and love with all the other Catholic Churches throughout the world — together with John Paul II, our pope.

We understand that to exercise their full influence, our recommendations must represent a true consensus of our local church. We understand that our consensus recommendations must find an echo in the other local churches throughout the world. They must be found faithful by theologians, historians and canonists to the church's living tradition. And finally, they must be discerned by the pope and bishops, the teaching church, to be God's will for us here and now before they can be implemented.

With these prophetic recommendations, our Synod is not attempting to legislate for the Universal Church. They are neither a blatant exercise in power politics nor an arrogant pre-emption of the prerogatives of another ecclesial person or body. They are the results of our local church doing what it is called by canon law to do: consulting the faithful.

Father Hart is director of the diocesan Synod.

# The world needs the salt of good people

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

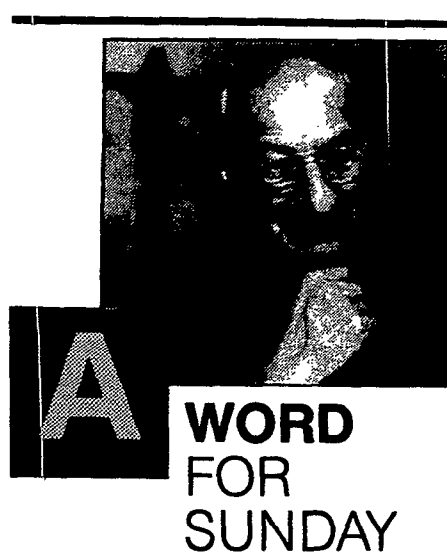
Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 5:13-16; (R1) Isaiah 58:7-10; (R2) 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

Jesus described His followers as "the salt of the earth" and the light of the world." He said, "You are the salt and the light" — "you," His followers. You are, that is, here and now, not someday in the future.

You are the salt and the light of what? Not just some little corner of this globe, but "of the earth and of the world." The implication is that the earth needs salting and the world light.

Jesus was complimenting His followers when he said to them, "You are the salt of the earth." Salt was a valuable commodity in the ancient world. Workers were paid with salt. In fact the word "salary" is derived from the word "salt."

Salt was such a valuable commodity because it was used to preserve food in the days before refrigerators. Salt was also used as an antiseptic to clean out wounds. It was very effective in fighting infection. Perhaps the most important thing about salt is that



it flavors foods. Did you ever eat fish without salt?

Today salt is used on the roads to melt snow and ice. The hallmark of Satan and evil is coldness. Hate is cold. The coldness is melted by love, which is the salt that overcomes evil and seasons society. The earth's salt are all those who love others as Jesus loved us.

Jesus also called us "the light of the world." A city seated on a mountain

can be seen for miles around, so the light of Jesus' followers should be seen by all. When someone lights a candle, he does not put it under a bushel basket because then the light would serve no purpose and would soon burn itself out. Our Christianity has got to show. If it does not, then we haven't got it. If we've got it, we can't hide it. It will show up in our talk, in our driving, in our work and in our play.

The salt loses its savor and the light is hidden when we start to become indifferent, unconcerned about whether we live or spread our faith. The process starts when we begin to neglect little things, such as morning and night prayers; when we begin to compromise on bigger things, such as contraception and abortion; when we begin to listen more to what people say than to what the church says.

Only a pinch of salt is needed to flavor food. Only a little light — striking a match in the dark — is enough to see where you are going. So God needs only a few to flavor this world, to give it light. A few ardent, devout loyal Catholics, who live the faith, can work wonders, as did 12 fishermen.

In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of*

Venice, Portia saves Antonio's life from the vengeful Shylock. Coming home at night after the trial, Portia's servants have a candle lit in the window to guide her home. Portia points out that light to Nerissa, her companion, and says, "How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

To be salt and light, learn the lesson from a record player.

You must have a record. Put on the player a record of enthusiasm. Throw out all negativism: carping, criticizing, bemoaning the evils of society and church. Stop being carriers of gloom and doom, like the daily newspapers. Be apostles of good news.

Then turn on the record player. The record spins round and round. So get moving, go around for Christ. The world needs the salt of good and the light of loving people.

Finally, lift the arm with the needle in it and put it gently on the record. So lift up your heads. Wear a smile for everybody. It's the language everyone understands. Put a hand out to help the poor and needy, then your light shall break forth like the dawn.

"The just man is a light in darkness to the upright."

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