

# A new way of looking at things

By Father Joseph A. Hart  
Guest contributor

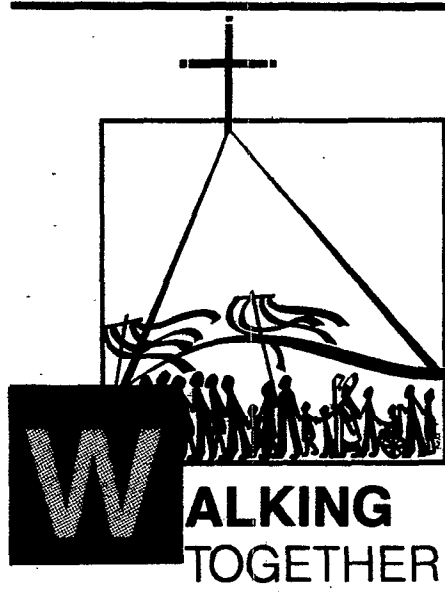
W. Edwards Deming is a hero in Japan. Beginning in the summer of 1950, this American statistician volunteered his time to help educate the presidents and middle managers of Japan's largest industries in the theories and techniques of "total quality management."

Japanese products, he told them, were known everywhere for their cheapness. Japan would never climb out of its post-war economic slump if they did not begin producing quality goods that would be sought after the world over.

Although many privately thought that Deming's theories and optimism were crazy, they were willing to experiment since — having lost everything in the war — they had nothing more to lose.

Deming urged management to revolutionize its thinking. The purpose of a business, he argued, is not to make money but to stay in business, providing jobs through innovation, research, constant improvement and maintenance.

The first rule of business, he taught, was to understand your customer. "Everyone has a customer. And if he doesn't know who it is and what constitutes the needs of the customer, and works in the cycle of adjustment to customers' needs and what he can



produce, then he does not understand his job."

Manufacturing, Deming insisted, must be employee centered. Workers want to produce quality products but often are hindered from doing so by inferior raw materials, malfunctioning machinery, the lack of teamwork, interfering supervisors and the lack of education to do the job effectively. Unlike the established wisdom, Deming held pride of workmanship as the most effective means of improving product quality, and not quotas, slogans, evaluations, merit pay or the techniques of fear.

We all know the results of these methods. By following Deming's theo-

ries carefully, Japan was propelled to the forefront of world economic power in just 25 years.

Good news travels fast. Because of Japan's success, over the past few years many manufacturers in our diocese — from Xerox to Corning Glass — have begun to use Deming's techniques. Such service organizations as Monroe Community Hospital and St. Ann's Home also have begun applying Deming's methods with some good results. His philosophy, in fact, is so prevalent these days that a number of people thought that our Synod process was planned with Deming in mind.

It wasn't.

And yet, because Deming's approach is so fundamentally Christian in its orientation, I can understand why people have found a similarity between what we are trying to do through the Synod and what Deming has tried to do with manufacturing.

Through the Synod we, the Church of Rochester, are trying to understand the needs of our "customers" better: i.e. families, singles, the elderly, youths and young adults, the unemployed, marginalized individuals, the dying, those with burdensome pregnancies, those suffering from racism and sexism, and just ordinary folks. Through this process, we hope to live the Gospel more effectively, continually improving our programs and our support for each other.

Through the Synod, we, the Church of Rochester, are trying to erase the barriers keeping us from communicating our needs to our communities, to our pastors, to our fellow parishioners. In small groups, we are exploring the ways that all of us — laity, religious, and priests — can be better servants to each other.

Through the Synod, we are discovering how much more education we need to do the "job" of being Christian well. We have come to realize that learning needs to be lifelong. We need help with our moral education and conscience formation. We need guidance to pray better. We need programs to stimulate our ongoing faith formation. We need more training to minister to each other more effectively.

In all of this, we are looking for new approaches, different insights, innovative ways of preaching the same Gospel, carrying on the same tradition, serving the same mission. We are not looking for innovation for its own sake but in order to better teach and better serve both God and our "customers," i.e. the whole Body of Christ.

In God's grace, we must always strive to do our very best or we, in truth, do not serve God not very well at all. Or, as they say in "Demingspeak," in Christianity, quality is job one.

Father Hart is director of the diocesan Synod.

## Rise now to new life, rise later to eternal life

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

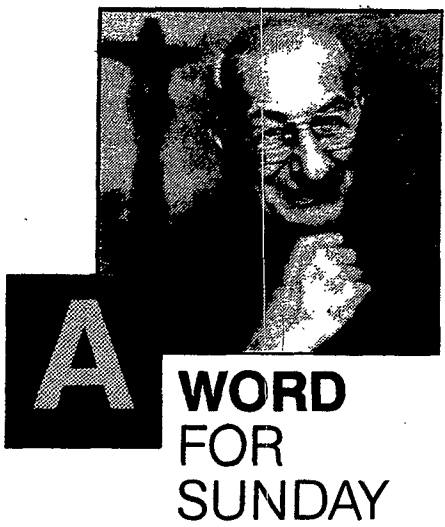
Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 11:1-45; (R1) Ezechiel 37:12-14; (R2) Romans 8:8-11.

Resurrection is the theme of Sunday's readings. Ezechiel, speaking of a national resurrection, preaches to the Jews enslaved in Babylon (R1). News had reached them that Jerusalem had been destroyed and the Temple leveled to the ground. This was the last straw. To prevent the Jews from falling into despair, Ezechiel preached hope: "I will open your graves and have you rise from them."

To the nations pray: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!" Ezechiel responded: "With the Lord there is kindness and plenteous redemption; he will redeem Israel. Therefore, hope! He will open your graves and have you rise from them."

St. Paul speaks of a spiritual resurrection. He tells the Romans they are already risen from the dead — from the death of sin — by baptism.

The Gospel speaks of the body's



resurrection. For us there is a double resurrection: first from sin and secondly from death. The Gospel tells of Jesus raising three people from the dead: the teenaged daughter of Jairus; the young son of the widow of Naim; and a full grown man, Lazarus.

These three resurrections differed from Jesus' Resurrection from the dead. When Jesus rose from the dead

on Easter, it was to a glorious eternal life. When these three were raised from the dead, it was to return to their former earthly life.

Jesus' Resurrection was a symbol of our resurrection after death and burial. The resurrections of the three in the Gospel was a symbol of our resurrection, not from physical death, but from the spiritual death of sin.

St. Augustine said that these three people symbolized the three states of sinners: the teenage girl, those starting on the road to sin; the young man, those caught in the habit of sin; Lazarus, the hardened sinner, dead and buried in sin. Their resurrections show that no matter how deeply one is entrapped in sin, God's mercy can always free the sinner, provided he uses the sacrament of mercy: penance.

Confession cleanses the soul from sin, raises one from spiritual death. But we come back to our old life and are called to live a new life on earth so that when physical death does come and ends our earthly life, we can be raised to the new and glorious life to come like the Easter Jesus.

This is possible because Jesus loves

us. Four times in the Gospel we are told that Jesus loved Lazarus. At his tomb, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" And he did.

Words are feeble, but in the mouth of God-made-man, they are dynamic, powerful, providing what they say. And that is precisely what sacraments are — words in the mouth of one who is another Christ.

A baby is brought to church, buried in original sin. The priest says, "I baptize you." Presto, the Holy Spirit comes, indwells in the child, giving it new life, leading to eternal life.

A priest takes a piece of bread, dead matter, inert, lifeless, and says, "This is my body," and it leaps into life.

A priest raises his hand over one steeped in sin and says, "I absolve you" and sin is destroyed and life returns. The grave is opened and the sinner rises from it.

Resurrection is a now-affair. In fact, our resurrection after death depends on our resurrection now. Only those who rise now to new life will rise later to eternal life.

To guarantee the latter, build monthly confession into your lives.

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