

COLUMNISTS

Heed 'ultimate investment counselor'

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 6:24-35. (R1) Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15. (R2) Ephesians 4:17, 20-24.

When people chased Jesus because he had fed them with the five loaves and fish, he rebuked them and said, "You are not looking for me because you have seen signs, but because you have eaten your fill of the loaves. You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal."

Experts tell us that the baby boom generation is becoming focused on the passage of time. Life is short and so many boomers are starting to think about retirement. Since many of them have lost faith in Social Security, these boomers are socking away money like never before. That is said to be the primary factor in the spectacular rise in the stock market over the past several years.

To you who are eyeing the future, ask yourselves this important question: "Have you checked on your investments lately?"

I don't have to tell you that money is not your most important investment. Some think it is. Some think, when I have enough money put away, then I'll enjoy life, do the things I want, be able to enjoy my family. If that is the way you think, chances are that day will never come. Enjoy yourself now. Enjoy your family now. Time is shorter than you think and time is far more precious than money. If you are selling your precious time just to get money, you are not a wise investor. Khalil



a word
for
sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

Gibran wrote: "They deem me mad because I will not sell my days for gold; And I deem them mad because they think my days have a price."

True, we've got to make ends meet. But should we let life slip by because all we do is worry about finances? So many neglect the really important things while they chase the almighty dollar. Can you imagine what that says to our young? No wonder so many of them become materialists. You and I may say we worship God, but the real homage is paid in our society and in many of our homes to mammon.

In Plato's *Republic* Socrates points out that it is not what youth are taught that most influences them, but what is applauded in the assembly and in the marketplace. And what many of our young see is that society worships money. They learn to agree with Voltaire who said, "When it is a question of money, everybody is of the same religion."

The pursuit of a meaningful life is more

important than money. Deep in our hearts we know that. I hope our youth will learn from the mistakes of our generation that making a contribution to society is more important than making a buck or having a good time. Why not invest in changing society and in changing your own life?

The poet Peguy once said that there is only one tragedy in life, the tragedy of not becoming a saint.

Jesus, the ultimate investment counselor, says, "You should not be working for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal, food which the Son of Man will give you." If Christ is not at the center of your investment strategy, you are not investing wisely, regardless of what your stockbroker may say.

We operate at a real deficit when we focus on bread for our tables but not on bread for our hungry hearts. How much time, energy and financial resources do we devote to the work of Christ? How much riches have we laid up in heaven? As a poet once said:

I counted all my dollars while God counted crosses;

I counted gains while he counted losses;

I counted my worth by the things gained in store,

But He sized me up by the scars that I bore.

I coveted honors and sought for degrees;

He wept as He counted the hours on my knees.

I never knew till one day by a grave How vain are the things that we spend life to save.

I did not know till a friend went above That richest is he who is rich in God's love.

Have you checked your investments lately?

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, August 4

Numbers 11:4-15;

Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday, August 5

Numbers 12:1-13;

Matthew 14:22-36

Wednesday, August 6

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14,

2 Peter 1:16-19; Mark 9:2-10

Thursday, August 7

Numbers 10:1-13;

Matthew 16:13-28

Friday, August 8

Deuteronomy 4:32-40;

Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday, August 9

Deuteronomy 6:4-13;

Matthew 17:14-20

Medical procedures must respect life

Q. I enjoy your articles on questions of faith. Now I have one on genetic engineering.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church clearly suggests that some gene-altering procedures are moral, others are not.

It would appear the church accepts some pre-birth surgeries, for Down syndrome, for example. Others (for left-handedness? eye color?) seem disapproved.

Some day it may be possible to isolate the "gay" gene and alter it.

When are such measures approved? Or when do they, as the catechism says, violate the "personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"? (No. 2275)

(New York)

A. The same fundamental moral principles apply for prenatal surgery as for surgery on any other human person.

Many questions may be considered. Do the benefits expected outweigh the risks? What burdens (pain, cost and so on) will the surgery (or lack of surgery) entail for



question
corner

BY FATHER JOHN DIETZEN

the patient and others?

What degree of hope exists that the surgery will be successful? If it is successful, is the hoped-for result proportionate to the "defect" being corrected?

The unique delicacy, technological complexity and experimental nature of embryonic gene replacement and repair will naturally greatly affect answers. But they are still valid questions.

For example, super high-risk procedures would be more acceptable in attempting to correct the chromosomal defects in Down syndrome children than

they would be to alter eye color or even the "inconvenience" of being left-handed.

The catechism makes this fairly clear earlier in the same section you mention.

Any procedures on the human embryo are lawful if they "respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing, the improvement of its condition of health or its individual survival" (quoting the 1987 Vatican document "The Gift of Life").

We will need much more information than we presently possess, I believe, especially in the fields of psychology and genetic biology, before we can properly apply these norms to altering the sexual orientation of the embryo.

Q. After my recent hospital visit to a friend with Alzheimer's, the lady who distributes Communion there told me my friend needs special permission from the church to receive the Eucharist.

I have an aunt with the same disease at the same hospital. Do these patients need special permission to go to Communion?

(New Jersey)

A. I don't know where the Communion minister received her information, but it is wrong.

Alzheimer's patients, in the mid- or later stages of the disease, normally fluctuate wildly in their level of awareness. Even people close to them often don't know how conscious they are of their surroundings at any given moment.

I have no idea why anyone should feel these patients should not receive Communion. It is always the church's policy to give the benefit of the doubt in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

There's no valid reason to change that policy for Alzheimer's patients.

(A free brochure on ecumenism, including questions on intercommunion and other ways of sharing worship with people of other faiths, is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Father John Dietzen, Holy Trinity Parish, 704 N. Main St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701.

(Questions may be sent to Father Dietzen at the same address.)

Women Needed for Hormone Therapy Research

As they search for the combinations of hormone replacement therapy that are both safe and effective, the Reproductive Endocrinology Unit and Menopause Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center seek women to participate in a study.

Volunteers must be healthy, post-menopausal women between the ages of 40 and 65. After a physical examination, women will be randomized to one of 8 treatment groups and receive various combinations of an FDA-approved estrogen and/or progestin, or placebo.

During this one-year study, volunteers are seen every three months. Benefits to volunteers include relief of menopausal symptoms, free mammogram, and possible relief of menopausal symptoms based on the medication(s) they receive. Compensation of \$450 is available. Women who have had a hysterectomy are not eligible.

Women interested in participating can call Wanda Rivers at 275-7891.



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