

# COLUMNISTS

## 'Worldly' events involve religious perspectives

I attended a conference a few weeks ago and was highly critical of one speaker because he seemed to be presenting points that I thought were pretty outdated. His topic was the relationship of spirituality and the world. He seemed, in my opinion, to be rehashing some basic Vatican II perspectives. This annoyed me because I wanted to hear something new and thought the audience was already familiar with the points he was making.

A few days later, I became involved in a conversation where some members insisted that churches should be in the business of praying and getting holy, not in 'becoming social workers' trying to fix the world. They insisted that anyone involved in trying to make the world better has to compromise with structures of evil to such a degree that they become corrupt. They felt that real models of holiness forego involvement in worldly pursuits (politics, finance and community action) in favor of world-denying spiritualities.

I started to have a great deal more respect for the speaker I had criticized earlier. Never one to be prudent enough to be quiet and listen, I launched into a diatribe before these poor unsuspecting souls. I pointed out many recent news events: the federal government's exercise of capital punishment, three people mur-



the  
moral  
life

BY PATRICIA SCHOELLES, SSJ

dered in one weekend on the streets of our city, health care in our city appearing to be in crisis and a prominent leader of one of our sister churches resigning because of dissension surrounding his church's stance on homosexuality.

I reminded my interlocutors fervently that these events refer us to some of the most important perspectives of Scripture and church teaching. Surely, no one can be genuinely spiritual without some thoughtful reflection on issues like these. Often it is secular events that evoke new spiritual insights and help us to understand and experience our religious beliefs in deeper, truer ways.

I became louder, more intense, and my sense of righteousness increased. To reinforce my position, I even resorted to one of the most irritating behaviors com-

mon to those who have spent time in graduate school. I started quoting church documents that supported my viewpoint.

I cited *Gaudium et Spes* that firmly established the church and its activities at the heart of all that affects human beings: "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."

I referred to Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* acknowledging that instead of worrying about 'dirtying our hands' in pursuit of good, the church actually urges us to collaborate with groups whose basic philosophies may not be 'Christian': "Again it is perfectly legitimate to make a clear distinction between a false philosophy of the nature, origin and purpose of human beings and the world, and economic, social, cultural, and political undertakings, even when such undertakings draw their origin and inspiration from that philosophy ... who can deny the possible existence of good and commendable elements in these undertakings?"

I expected everyone present to have seen the logic of my arguments and to express total agreement with me. They did no such thing. In fact, everyone went back to his or her original position. Further-

more, I had the feeling that I had suddenly become a kind of social pariah in the group. I reminded myself of a resolution I have made numberless times, which is to stop trying to coerce everyone who falls in my wake to think exactly as I do.

I came away wishing that I had listened more to my mother who so often advised me to adopt a different conversation style so that I would listen more and not rant. I decided the conference speaker I had heard earlier wasn't so bad after all, since there exists within Christianity a deep suspicion of 'the world' and a great temptation that expresses itself in every age encouraging us to separate the spiritual from the secular. I resolved not to quote church documents at social gatherings. I decided (again) that I would try to express the truth that I see without trying to determine the outcome of other people's response. I may not keep these resolutions but I think it is really important to keep learning that stating one's own truth and living by it is way more important than trying to control responses others may make to truths we hold dear. In fact, trying to control others may be a significant violation of moral living altogether.

...  
Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's Institute.

## Shedding burdens can enable us to glory in Christ

14th Sunday of the Year (July 8): (R3) Luke 10:1-12, 17-20; (R1) Isaiah 66:10-14; (R2) Galatians 6:14-18.

Picture, if you will, the typically dressed Jew in Palestine in the time of Jesus. He or she had five articles of clothing. Two tunics: one was an inner garment, the other, an outer one used as a cloak by day and a blanket by night. Then there was a girdle, a kind of waistband worn over the two tunics, a head covering and sandals. A wallet or traveler's bag was carried for food and money and slung over the shoulder.

When Jesus sent his disciples out on a missionary journey, he told them to leave most of these things behind, to travel light. Too much baggage would bog them down and make it difficult for them to focus on Jesus and his call on our lives.

Often sheep become cast down. Very often this happens because the sheep has too much wool! The sheep's fleece becomes very long, heavily matted with mud and burrs and other debris so that it is weighed down with its own wool, rendered totally helpless and useless.

Sheep do not particularly enjoy being sheared, but, when it is over, they are free to follow the shepherd once again.

What's bogging us down? What excess



a word  
for  
sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

baggage or wool might we still be carrying? Our Lord asks us to leave behind the luggage of complaints, grudges, resentments. Healing often has to do with shedding what weighs us down and accepting Jesus' invitation to fall in love again with our life of faith, to follow Jesus again with a light step and a light heart, with a little courage for the rough spots, and with a prayer in our hearts.

St. Paul put it this way: "May I never boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

We all glory in something: some in accomplishments, others in possessions. But how many of us glory in the cross of Christ? When Christ bore the cross of Calvary, he identified with our situation. He endured the crises, rejection, suffer-

ing, and betrayals which we endure. He walked where we walk; hurt where we hurt. So we can glory in the cross of Christ because he understands.

Franciszek Gajowniczek died on March 13, 1995, at age 94, in Warsaw, Poland. Franciszek spent years paying witness to a Franciscan monk who died in his stead at Auschwitz concentration camp.

In July 1941, the Nazis selected Franciszek and nine other inmates to die of starvation as punishment for another prisoner's escape. Franciszek pleaded not to be sent to the starvation cell. He had a wife and two sons. The Rev. Maximilian Kolbe volunteered to die in Franciszek's place. Kolbe survived more than 14 days in the starvation bunker with no food or water. The Nazis ended Kolbe's life in August 1941 with a lethal injection. In recognition of Kolbe's saintly life, the church canonized him in 1982.

Franciszek spent the rest of his life traveling through Europe and the United States giving talks about the saint and laying cornerstones for churches built in Kolbe's name.

Franciszek gloried in what Father Kolbe did in his behalf. St. Paul gloried in what Christ had done for him. Ought we not to glory in this same Christ who

loved us so much that he gave his life for us? "I glory in the cross of Christ."

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

### Daily Readings

Monday, July 9

Genesis 28:10-22A; Psalms 91:1-4, 14-15AB; Matthew 9:18-26

Tuesday, July 10

Genesis 32:23-33; Psalms 17:1-3, 6-7, 8B, 15; Matthew 9:32-38

Wednesday, July 11

Genesis 41:55-57, 42:5-7A, 17-24A; Psalms 33:2-3, 10-11, 18-19; Matthew 10:1-7

Thursday, July 12

Genesis 44:18-21, 23B-29, 45:1-5; Psalms 105:16-21; Matthew 10:7-15

Friday, July 13

Genesis 46:1-7, 28-30; Psalms 37:3-4, 18-19, 27-28, 39-40; Matthew 10:16-23

Saturday, July 14

Genesis 49:29-32, 50:15-26A; Psalms 105:1-4, 6-7; Matthew 10:24-3

### Feet First

Pedorthic Foot Care

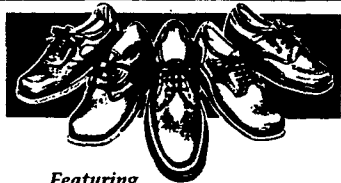
John J. Jacobs, Ph.D., Certified Pedorthist

Quality Full Service Pedorthic Care, Custom-Molded Shoes, Custom Foot Orthoses, Shoe Modifications, Depth-inlay Shoes, Insoles and More

"We fit feet, to keep feet fit"

We accept Medicaid, Medicare & Other Insurance Plans • Hours: Tues.-Fri. 10-5:30 • Sat. 10-3 or by appointment

TOPS BRIGHTON PLAZA • 716-442-4990



Featuring  
P. W. MINOR  
New depth

### Looking for Quality Printing?

Call us for...  
Bulletins &  
Computer  
Forms

Through a special arrangement between Wayuga Press and the Catholic Courier Graphic's Department, you can now get quality, affordable typesetting and printing.

.....  
Give us a call for your next job!

COURIER GRAPHICS • 716-328-4340

WAYUGA PRESS • 315-754-6229

Father McBrien's column was not available to the *Courier* at press time.

### Kids' answers from page 12

F

T

T

T

F

T

T

F



Catholic  
Family  
Center

### Pregnant? Need Help?

Catholic Family Center's Pregnancy Hotline

CALL 1-800-CARE-002

25 Franklin Street • Sibley Tower Building, 7th Floor  
Rochester, New York 14604-1007 • 716-546-7220

www.cfcrochester.org