

COLUMNISTS

Naming of bishops is now an internal process

The writings of Pope Leo the Great (440-61) and Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) testify that it was normal for the church in the West (Italy, Gaul, northern Europe and North Africa) to select its pastoral leaders with and through the consent of the clergy and laity, as well as the bishops of neighboring dioceses.

However, if the bishops and clergy preferred a candidate that the laity disapproved of, that candidacy would not likely survive. That is how decisive the voice of the faithful was in the early church.

Only later did temporal rulers, patriarchs and eventually the pope himself become directly involved in the selection of bishops. The pope, however, did not have a direct hand in appointments outside of Italy until the end of the first millennium.

With the tribal migrations of the sixth and seventh centuries and the coming of feudalism in the ninth, the old social order was disrupted and eventually replaced. The line between the secular and the sacred was effectively erased, and the episcopal office became, as in the East, a political prize and even a family inheritance. Some bishoprics remained in certain noble families for generations.

By the 10th century the role of the local clergy and laity in the elections of their bishops was practically nonexistent.



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

With the reform movement of the 11th century, led by Pope Gregory VII (1073-85), the temporal hold on church offices (embodied in the term "lay investiture") began to weaken. With that reform, however, also came centralization of authority in the papacy. Indeed, it would produce a new kind of papacy—legalistic and monarchical in character.

For a period of some 70 years, the reform movement tried to restore the ancient practice where the clergy, laity and neighboring bishops played a key part in the selection of bishops. Gradually, all of them lost their role in the process, only to be supplanted by the pope and the king or local prince. The laity were limited to consenting "humbly" to whatever choice had been made for them.

Pope Pius VII's concordat with

Napoleon in 1801 had the effect of vesting in the pope alone the power to appoint and remove bishops anywhere in the Roman Catholic Church. That system has remained in place ever since. The fact that it has absolutely nothing to do with the will of Christ or with the authentic tradition of the church seems to escape many Catholics, even many bishops.

How, then, are bishops chosen today? In the Roman Catholic Church, the bishops of a given province (regional cluster of dioceses) meet regularly, discuss potential candidates, and draw up a list to be forwarded to the Holy See through the papal representative in their country.

The nuncio or apostolic delegate conducts an investigation into the needs of the diocese, the qualifications required of its bishop and the names suggested by the bishops of the province. Priests and lay persons may be consulted, but always individually, never in groups, and always under the cloak of absolute secrecy.

A list of three names, the "terna" ("three together"), is forwarded by the papal representative to the Vatican's Congregation for Bishops, together with information about the diocese and his own recommendation. The Congregation reviews the candidates, consults with other departments of the Roman Curia and

submits a final recommendation to the pope, who alone makes the decision.

The papal representative contacts the appointee to see if he is willing to accept. If he accepts, he must keep the matter secret until the Vatican announces it. He then has three months to be ordained (or installed if already a bishop), and four months to take possession of the diocese.

In the naming of auxiliary bishops, the diocesan bishop draws up a list of three names, with or without consultation with his priests and laity. The Congregation of Bishops reviews the list, makes its own recommendation and the pope decides.

In Eastern churches a similar process is followed for dioceses that are outside the traditional patriarchal structures (i.e., outside Egypt and the Middle East). Patriarchs themselves are selected by the Patriarchal Synod, but they must exchange letters of communion with the pope before they can fully exercise their office.

In Eastern churches headed by an archbishop, the Archiepiscopal Synod elects the archbishop, who also must exchange letters of communion with the pope.

Catholic tradition in this regard is truly varied.

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

Determination often decides success or failure

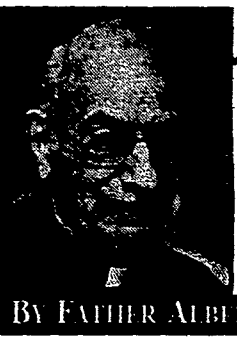
20th Sunday of the Year (August 18): (R3) Matthew 5:21-28; (R1) Isaiah 56:1, 6-7; (R2) Romans 11:13-15, 29-32.

If you want to make some money, find a boxing fan and propose this bet: "True or false: The first person ever to knock John L. Sullivan out in a boxing ring was a woman." You'll win! Mrs. Hessian Donahue used to don a loose blouse, bloomers and boxing gloves and stand in for a few fake rounds with the champ as part of a vaudeville act. One night in 1892, Sullivan connected with a genuine blow to Hessian's face—and got her mad. She retaliated with a solid punch of her own and knocked the previously unbeaten Sullivan out for over a minute.

Women have been called the weaker sex, but there have always been women with strength and determination.

We have to admire women like the Canaanite woman who came to Jesus in Sunday's Gospel. She had good excuses for not even trying to get an audience with the Master. Probably she wouldn't have even bothered him except that her daughter was tormented by a demon.

This woman had lots of strikes against her. First, she was a woman, and we know how women were regarded in biblical times. Then she was a Canaanite.



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

The antipathy between Jews and Canaanites is revealed in the give-and-take between Jesus and the woman. She asks for help, and Jesus says, "It is not right to take the food of children and throw it to the dogs." That is a bit disturbing to hear Jesus referring to this woman as a dog. But this poor woman refused to give up. "Yes, Lord," she responds, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Jesus is touched and heals her daughter.

Several years ago an important speaker addressed the student body of a college in South Carolina. The auditorium was filled with students excited to hear a person of her stature speak. She began:

"I was born to a mother who was deaf and could not speak. I do not know who my father is or was. The first job I ever had was in a cotton field."

She continued, "Nothing has to remain the way it is if that's not the way a person wants it to be. It isn't luck, and it isn't circumstances, and it isn't being born a certain way that cause a person's future to become what it becomes." She repeated, "Nothing has to remain the way it is if that's not the way a person wants it to be."

"All a person has to do to change a situation that brings unhappiness or dissatisfaction is answer the question: 'How do I want this situation to become?' Then the person must commit totally to personal actions that carry them there." Then a beautiful smile shone forth as she said, "My name is Azie Taylor Morton. I stand before you today as Treasurer of the United States of America."

So often in life the deciding factor between success and failure is pure determination. It is not race or religion or gender. It is not who your parents are or what school you attended. All of these can be important factors, and we should not minimize how great the obstacles are that many people overcome. Still, the biggest determinant in a successful life is

commitment, desire, determination.

You and I may face many obstacles in life. But there is one who is eager to heed anyone who comes in faith. Jesus said to the Canaanite woman, "You have great faith! Your request is granted."

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

Daily Readings

Monday, August 19

Ezekiel 24:15-24; (Ps) Deuteronomy 32:18-21; Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday, August 20

Ezekiel 28:1-10; (Ps) Deuteronomy 32:26-28, 30, 35-36; Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday, August 21

Ezekiel 34:1-11; Psalms 23:1-6; Matthew 20:1-16A

Thursday, August 22

Ezekiel 36:23-28; Psalms 51:12-15, 18-19; Matthew 22:1-14

Friday, August 23

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalms 107:2-9; Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday, August 24

Revelation 21:9B-14; Psalms 145:10-13AB, 17-18; John 1:45-51

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SATURDAY BREAKFAST SPECIALS

Kids' Chronicle

Answers from page 7:

1. apples, 2. melon, 3. fish, 4. milk, honey, 5. herbs, 6. bread



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