

# CATHOLIC CALENDAR.

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## 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders of the people:

"What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' He said in reply, 'I will not,' but afterwards he changed his mind and went. The man came to the other son and gave the same order. He said in reply, 'Yes, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did his father's will?" They

answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. When John came to you in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him; but tax collectors and prostitutes did. Yet even when you saw that, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

- Matthew 21:28-32

## Archbishop responds to media reports about committee changes

WASHINGTON — In a letter to the Chicago Tribune last week, Archbishop Harry J. Flynn of St. Paul and Minneapolis, responded to media reports alleging erroneous reasons why some bishops who have been serving on the Ad Hoc Committee for Sexual Abuse of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will not continue to serve on the restructured committee.

Archbishop Flynn chairs this committee.

Previously the Ad Hoc Committee had been made up of the chairmen of several standing committees of the USCCB. It was restructured under the Charter for the Protection Children and Young People, adopted by the bishops at their June meeting. Its membership is now made up of one bishop from each of the 14 regions into which the dioceses and archdioceses of the U.S. are divided.

Archbishop Flynn stated, "Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark, though he served only a short time on the Committee, played a crucial role in the drafting of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and a second document entitled 'Essential Norms.'"

Archbishop Flynn added, "Even though the draft documents had passed in Dallas, I am sure that Archbishop Myers would have been glad to continue serving; but he was also kind enough to indicate that he would be willing to allow an Eastern Catholic archbishop from his region [Region 3] to serve in his stead."

Archbishop Stefan Soroka of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Ukrainian represents Region 3 on the restructured Committee.

With regard to Bishop John McCormack of Manchester, Archbishop Flynn recalled his long service to

the Committee during which time he contributed to its efforts in several capacities, eventually as its chairman.

Bishop McCormack was one of two bishops already serving on the Committee from Region 1, Archbishop Flynn said, and Bishop McCormack thought that with his "having served so long, Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, a recent appointee, ought to serve as representative of the region."

Even if the Committee had not been re-structured, Auxiliary Bishop A. James Quinn of Cleveland would have been leaving the Committee since his term as chairman of the canonical affairs committee would end this November.

"He indicated that he was glad to be relieved of the committee obligations which take a good deal of time away from a bishop's primary obligation to his own diocese," Archbishop Flynn said.

In additional remarks, Archbishop Flynn said that, along with the other bishops of the Conference, he greatly valued Bishop McCormack's longstanding commitment to the Committee and his many contributions to its work: Bishop Quinn's canonical expertise and pastoral sensitivity; and Archbishop Myers' canonical and pastoral insights into dealing with the issues facing the Committee.

## The Lady In The Front Pew

The lady in the front pew was always there. And now she's gone. The smiling, faith-filled, elegant lady with the cane was always there in the front pew of my Cathedral Church when I celebrated the 9:30 Mass on Sunday mornings. She was 97 years old and she had been a Cathedral parishioner for more than 54 years. But she will not be there next Sunday.

I noticed her the first Sunday that I celebrated the Eucharist at the Cathedral. The first thing I noticed was her radiant smile. Her whole being conveyed a quiet beauty and inner joy. I was particularly struck by the fact that she was always in the front pew, since the front pews of Catholic churches are often empty on Sunday mornings. I sensed that she was there not simply to see better and to hear better, but also because she wanted to be close to the celebration in the sanctuary. She clearly grasped the importance of what was going on there. In time I became aware of the intensity of her prayer and of her profound awareness of the "Sacred mysteries" that were being celebrated at the altar.

In spite of the infirmities of the years, she seemed undistracted throughout the Mass. She actually listened to the readings from the scripture that were being proclaimed as well as to the homily. When I greeted her after Mass, she said more than the usual, "Bishop, I really enjoyed your homily." She spoke about specific points in the homily and what they meant to her. When she went home she discussed the Scripture and homily with family members. When I offered special Sunday afternoon reflections on the Scripture readings of Advent and Lent, there she was in the front pew, eager to learn more about the Word of God that had nourished her through the years.

The face of the beautiful lady in the front pew seemed transfixed during the liturgy of the Eucharist. Her entire being seemed focused on the words of the Eucharistic Prayer. And when the words of consecration, "This is My Body. This is My Blood," were pronounced over the bread and wine, she seemed to be caught up in a kind of mystical communion with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This spiritual rapture was even more apparent when I walked to her pew and ministered to her the "living Bread that has come down from heaven." As I distributed the Eucharist to the rest of the Christian faithful in the Cathedral, I sometimes glanced at her singular reverence in the pres-

ence of this great Sacrament of the encounter with Christ.

Almost all of my encounters with the Spirit filled lady in the front pew were at the Cathedral. However, it was obvious to me the she was not a person living in the private world of a selfish "Jesus and me" spirituality. Her single-minded fo-

ing in virtue and devotion to the good of the Church, no one was ever jealous or envious of the Ladies and Gentlemen in the Front Pew. They were respected and revered as witnesses of our faith, living examples of the Royal Nation and the Priesthood of the Faithful into which all are baptized.

In all of our parishes in the Diocese of Lake Charles and all over this country, there are wonderful Catholic women and men who have lived and are continuing to live remarkable, though perhaps unnoticed, lives of Christian faith. These holy ones of God are an occasion of grace for all of us. We should be ever aware of them. We should look for opportunities for our teenagers and young adults to meet them and imitate them. Because no matter where they sit in our churches, these are the Ladies and Gentlemen in the Front Pew.

The lady in the front pew in the Cathedral was only one of many excellent Christian people who have lived long and faithful lives in mother church of the Diocese fed by the proclamation of the Word, the breaking of the Bread and the blessing of the Cup. I give thanks to God for each one of them for they inspire me and sustain me in my Episcopal ministry more than they can know.

The lady in the front pew will no longer be there on Sunday mornings. Perhaps her place will be left empty as we left the places of our "Elder Mothers and Fathers" empty at St. Catherine's when we could no longer see their presence. We knew that somehow they were still present. Because we needed them to be the Church, the Body of Christ. The lady in the front pew died on Wednesday, July 24th. The Liturgy of Christian Burial was celebrated for her at her beloved Cathedral on Friday, July 26th. Her name was Mrs. Kathryn Coleman.

When I think of "Miss Kathryn," and pray for her often with gratitude, these words from the Book of Proverbs come to mind.

"Who shall find a valiant woman? Her worth is more than the rarest pearl brought from distant shores. The heart of her husband trusts in her and from her comes only gain. She will bring forth goodness, never sorrow, all the days of her life. Her children rise up to call her blessed. Many good women have enriched their homes, but amongst them she is unrivaled. Winning ways may be deceptive. Beauty is but a breath. It is the woman who loves the Lord who shall be renowned now and forever!"

## Cardinal urges House to support Abortion Non-discrimination Act

WASHINGTON — Warning of "a growing nationwide effort to attack the conscience rights of Catholic and other health care providers," Cardinal Anthony Bevilacqua urged members of the House of Representatives to support the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act.

A vote on the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 4691) is expected shortly. The Act is sponsored by over 80 House members, has been the subject of a subcommittee hearing, and is endorsed by many pro-life, religious and medical organizations.

"Passage of H.R. 4691 is urgently needed," said Cardinal Bevilacqua. The Cardinal, Chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote to the House last week.

Citing examples of the threat to freedom of conscience, Cardinal Bevilacqua noted that an Alaska court recently forced a community hospital to provide elective late-term abortions contrary to its policy and the sentiment of the community. In another case, abortion advocacy groups urged the state of New Jersey to require a Catholic health system to build an abortion clinic on its premises, to serve what they see as a right of "access" to abortion.

"H.R. 4691 addresses these problems...by clarify-

ing the scope of a nondiscrimination statute (42 USC §238n) that Congress overwhelmingly approved in 1996," Cardinal Bevilacqua wrote. "The current law protects 'health care entities,' including medical residency programs, from being forced by government bodies to provide abortions or abortion training. The new bill makes it clear that the protection extends to the full range of health care entities, including hospitals and individual health professionals other than physicians. It also applies this protection to entities being told they must pay for abortions against their will.

"Abortion advocates' claim to support a 'right to choose' is open to serious question if they oppose this modest bill," Cardinal Bevilacqua continued. "I hope Congress will take to heart what was said by a board member of the Alaska hospital at the subcommittee hearing on this bill: Hospitals and other health care providers have 'a right to choose not to be involved in destroying life.'"

The Cardinal's letter was sent to all members of the House of Representatives along with a fact sheet rebutting charges against the bill by the American Civil Liberties Union (available at [www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/aculfact.htm](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/aculfact.htm)).

By Fr. Frank Pavone  
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Priests for Life

The wound comes from well-meaning people. "Well, it wasn't that far along." "You can always have another child." "Lots of people go through this."

Miscarriage is a tragedy that so many people misunderstand. They are not quite sure how to console a friend or relative who has suffered this loss.

While there are no magic formulas, there is one fundamental truth that needs to stay front and center: a miscarriage is the loss of a child who is just as real and has just as much value as any other child of any age. A woman who has a miscarriage is a parent who has lost a child, as is the father of the child as well.

In a society which continues to have a legal and cul-

tural blind spot for the unborn, many suffer from the illusion that miscarriage doesn't grieve a parent as much as the loss of, well, a "real child." And that is precisely what hurts so much. We can never console someone in grief if we imply, even remotely, that the person they lost wasn't real.

Dr. Byron Calhoun, President of the American Association of Pro-life Ob-Gyns, has observed that prior to 1970, the loss of a child before or during birth was often treated in medical literature as a "non-event," but that now there is a growing awareness of the grief associated with such loss. In fact, Dr. Calhoun has developed a hospice program for unborn children.

As the medical community advances in sensitivity and

understanding of these points, so must we all. Our love, our compassion, our sharing in the grief of such losses, can bring healing to the parents who have suffered miscarriage. The naming of these children who have died is one significant way of acknowledging their reality. The counting of these children matters too, so that if a parent is asked how many children he/she has, the child who died before birth is counted as one of them.

I recall the first pro-life billboard that we set up in 1990 here in our community of Staten Island, New York. It depicted a developing unborn child. One of the first phone calls I received about it was from a woman who had lost a child by miscarriage. "I can't tell you how

consoling your billboard is to me. Thank you."

That was all she said. Perhaps the reason it was consoling was that someone was saying publicly what she knew privately: that was a real child. The life of that child matters, no matter how short it was. The death of that child matters, no matter how many may not cry. And the love I have for that child matters, even if nobody else knows.

Lord, comfort all parents who grieve the loss of their children of any age. Take them into Your loving arms, and give us strength until the day You give them back to us in heaven. Amen.

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