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UNIVERSITY
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University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Library Circulation 210-230-6530
Boath Hall 210-230-5242

Fifth Sunday
of the Year
February 8, 1987

Come, let us worship the Lord,
for He is our God.

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RELIGIOUS  BULLETIN

Volume III Issue 18 February 8, 1987

YOUR LIGHT WILL RISE IN THE DARKNESS!

HEAR YE!

HEAR YE!

REMINDERS...

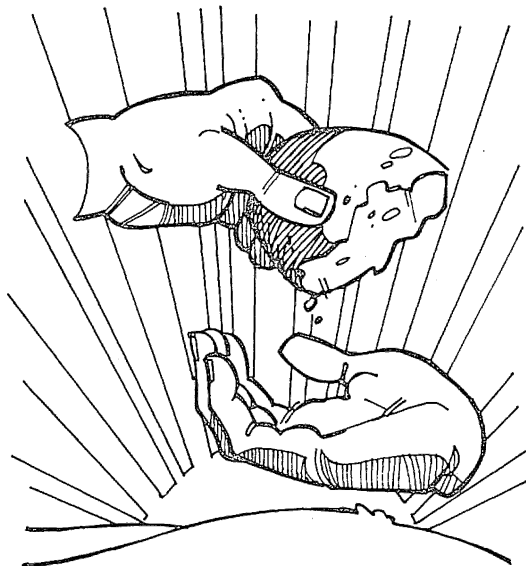
Feb 8 & 10, Sun & Tues.
Catholic Faith Program:
PRAYER by Pat Gantz.
7 - 8:30 in Keenan Stanford Chapel.

Feb. 12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY

Feb. 13 Fri Full moon

Feb. 14 St. Valentine's Day

Feb. 15 Susan B. Anthony



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1987

**YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH ,
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!**

YOUR LIGHT MUST SHINE IN THE EYES OF ALL!

WE ARE GOD'S LIGHT IN THE WORLD

***When asked to write about women in the Church, I first jumped at the opportunity, being someone who is in my sixth exciting year of ministry. But the reality of the enormity of the topic soon hit me and I began to feel quite awkward in writing, knowing that my own experience has been very positive and fulfilling, but also I know many female colleagues who have felt disempowered, unappreciated and embittered. Their story is as real as mine and cannot be overlooked in the discussion, and yet I am fortunate to be able to speak out of an experience of hope and promise. In my search for a focus, I found the readings for this Sunday very helpful and enlightening. (Isn't it amazing and comforting how God's word speaks to us as clearly today as when it was written?)

***In the Old Testament reading, Isaiah calls the people to a lifestyle of compassion and self-giving, FOR IT IS THEN THAT GOD'S LIGHT WILL SHINE THROUGH THE INDIVIDUAL AND BANISH DARKNESS. His message is that we are to be God's instruments in this world through which oppression will be vanquished and all will know that God is truly present in our individual lives. This theme of MISSION is carried over by Jesus in the Gospel reading where He both instructs the disciples in the importance of the statement they make through their lifestyle and also affirms them in their calling as concrete signs of God's love to the world. AS SALT OF THE EARTH, we must live a life which truly seasons all those with whom we have contact, to help bring about the best in humanity and set an example for how we are the chosen vehicles through which all will come to know and give praise to God.

***This call to mission in the name of our God is at the root of our baptismal commitment as followers of Jesus. IT IS A

COMMITMENT THAT EACH CHRISTIAN, MALE AND FEMALE IS CALLED TO LIVE OUT. Just as the oppression and suffering that Isaiah speaks of knows no distinction between men and women, I BELIEVE JESUS CALLS ALL PEOPLE TO BE THE SALT OF THE EARTH; THAT EVERY MAN AND WOMAN CAN BE A CHANNEL OF GOD'S GRACE.

PRAYER

- Pat Gantz
Retreat Ministry

February 8

February 10

***As I have tried to follow that call in my life, I have come to recognize the gifts God has given me for the service of others and have come to discern a real calling to put those gifts to use through the institutional church. The needs of our world are so great; there is so much work to be done and I simply choose to do my part explicitly in the name of our God through the Church. The Roman Catholic Church has made significant advances in recognizing the gifts of the laity and developing avenues to put those gifts to work within its ranks. That is not to say that there are not still members who try to put a bushel basket on top of many gifted lay people who ask for recognition and authority to do the work God called them to do. But no one can extinguish the light of God in a follower whose desire is to serve the fulfilling of the Kingdom here on earth. We face discrimination and contempt, our work may not be recognized by those in authority and we may have to deal with humiliation and frustration, but God's work will be done. His grace will prevail and many will recognize that God is present in our world because of the work that we do in God's name.

***As salt of the earth, we must all work hard not to become flat, to lose our zeal, to become confused in our motivation. I THINK WOMEN, BECAUSE OF THE GREAT PRESSURE UPON THEM TO LEGITIMIZE THEIR WORK IN MALE DOMINATED HIERARCHY, ARE CALLED TO GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY TO BE PURER SEASONERS. And whereas I pray for the day when our Church will totally embrace the many gifts of the laity, especially women, I will not wait until that day before I begin to do my part, to follow our Lord in the best way I can to be faithful to the call I hear.

***College years are often filled with a great yearning and searching for where you will fit in this world, what will be your role in society and in our Church. I would encourage each student here on campus, woman and man, to examine the gifts that God has given you and be open to the possibility that God is calling you to use those gifts in service through His Church. Many possibilities exist to be God's light in the world. A LIFE OF MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH MAY NOT BE THE EASIEST ROUTE, but it is certainly filled with great challenges and rewards in coming to continually know and serve our God.

---Carol Guenther
woman, wife, mother and
marriage preparation minister

ONE OF THE GREATEST EVILS OF THE DAY AMONG THOSE OUTSIDE OF PRISON IS THEIR SENSE OF FUTILITY. YOUNG PEOPLE SAY WHAT GOOD CAN ONE PERSON DO? WHAT IS THE SENSE OF OUR SMALL EFFORT? THEY CANNOT SEE THAT WE MUST LAY ONE BRICK AT A TIME, TAKE ONE STEP AT A TIME, WE CAN BE RESPONSIBLE ONLY FOR THE ONE ACTION OF THE PRESENT MOMENT. BUT WE CAN BEG FOR AN INCREASE OF LOVE IN OUR HEARTS THAT WILL VITALIZE AND TRANSFORM ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS, AND KNOW THAT GOD WILL TAKE THEM AND MULTIPLY THEM, AS JESUS MULTIPLIED THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

DOROTHY DAY

The Giver

Tony was a man who continued to give of himself despite horrendous circumstance. Twenty-five years ago, his long-distance Christmas gift transformed 19 lives.

Prayer Starter

I had come to the East Orange, N.J., Veterans Hospital for a private conference after the service officer of the local American Legion post asked me to handle the estate of a deceased veteran named Tony.

A cardboard box rested on a bare, white table at the hospital. Although the box looked ordinary, its contents did not. Inside were tiny, odd-shaped mechanical devices and delicate pulleys designed to respond to the sensitivity of the mouth and tongue of a man paralyzed below the neck, bearing silent witness to a nearly motionless life.

Old letters and a Christmas greeting card were also among the items, and at the bottom of the box was a faded photo of film actor Don Ameche. Looking at it I thought about Tony and the Majestic Theater in Perth Amboy, N.J.

The large, square brick building, now an abandoned movie house on Madison Avenue awaiting demolition, had once been a choice stop on the colorful vaudeville circuit. During the Great Depression it became a spinner of double-feature dreams on the silver screen and a world unto itself. Tony—in his early 30's, slim, dark-complexioned, with black curly hair and a quick grin, a whisk broom and monkey wrench protruding from his overalls—was as much a part of the place as the movie comedy-team *Wheeler & Woolsey*. A highly social man who spoke with a heavy Italian accent, Tony was janitor and handyman at the Majestic. The show could not have gone on without him. His favorite words were "no problem" even when, obviously, there was one. If the film's reel broke down, fights erupted in the audience or howling lost tots wandered the darkened aisles, Tony could be heard over the din shouting "no problem," and all would soon be well.

Nobody was certain how he came to be in Perth Amboy, but it was rumored that he had "jumped ship" from a commercial steamer docked in Raritan Bay. Such undocumented aliens were not uncommon in waterfront communi-

«Alvin B. Lebar is an attorney and freelance writer living in Metuchen, N.J.»

the course of the proceedings, she made three tours by bus to the 19 heirs within a radius of 75 miles. Each excursion consumed two days. The papers, properly notarized and laden with bulky, blue seals affixed next to each signature, arrived in large, striped envelopes.

I had anticipated that the sum involved in the estate would be slight, but surprisingly the total—including the proceeds of a Government life insurance policy—came to \$134,000. Since Tony was completely disabled and bedridden, his disability allowance was deposited for him in the hospital trust account where the principal accumulated and gathered interest for nearly 20 years. Withdrawals were minimal—less than \$150 annually. I would eventually learn that the net estate translated into more than eight hundred million lira!

ties. He lived alone in a rooming house on Catalpa Avenue, where the other tenants were elderly Orthodox Jews. Tony, a Catholic, would regularly go from room to room after the onset of the Jewish Sabbath to douse the lights for his pious cotenants.

He was among the unnamed people upon whom numerous community charity drives depended. Once he appeared at our door to collect a small donation for the First Aid Squad, rendering a receipt written in thick, black pencil. It was the only time I saw him in a dress suit.

In February 1942, he enlisted in the Army and was granted United States citizenship under a special Government decree. In early November of that year, as his unit supported the Marines on Guadalcanal, he was cut down by machine-gun fire. For over a year he struggled to live with a severed spinal cord. He spent the last 18 years of his life at the Veterans Hospital, paralyzed below the neck and immobile, until his death in the summer of 1961.

The first year of his confinement at the hospital, the guest chart revealed occasional visits from some townspeople—the man who operated the projector at the Majestic, the lady in the box office, some of the Catalpa Avenue roomers and a few local businessmen. But visitors soon dwindled. During the last 15 years of his life, only the ladies from the American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 45, in Perth Amboy, made the annual Memorial Day trip. Otherwise the pages were blank.

His heirs lived in Italy near the city of Siracusa, Sicily, on the small island of Ortigia. There was no will; the next-of-kin and distributees numbered 19—brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews. All were desperately poor.

Fortunately, my letter was referred to a local notary public, a lively grandmother who mistrusted the mail service and appeared to spend much of her time riding buses. A kind of magistrate, she efficiently assumed the task of securing and notarizing signatures on various documents. In

By the week before Christmas, the fund was ready for distribution.

Walking to the post office bearing the stack of envelopes for overseas delivery to the heirs, I thought about the givers like Tony and how, despite the most horrendous of circumstances, they continue to give as if by some kind of divine momentum. If you told that to Tony he would not know what you were talking about, yet for 18 bedridden years, month after month, he continued to store a gift that would ultimately lift 19 people up from the ravages of poverty.

In her final letter, the notary public, conveying the feelings of the family, wrote: "*Lo avranno per sempre nel cuore*" ("They will hold him safe forever within their hearts").

The visitors' pages would no longer be blank. ☒