

STOP RUNNING

By Monsignor Frank Chiodo, St Anthony Catholic Church

A great evangelist tells the story of a young man who upon graduating from college asked his father to get him a new car. The day of graduation arrived, and the father, a fervent Christian, handed him a brightly wrapped package. As the young man opened it he imagined it was a small model of his new car only to find to his shock, it was a bible. The young man was livid. He threw the bible down and stomped out of the room. He never spoke to his father again.

Years later his mother sent for the son informing him that his father had died. After the father's funeral the son was sitting in his parents' home when he noticed a bible on the mantle. He recognized it to be the bible his father had given him years before and the one he had angrily thrown to the floor. As he paged through the bible he leafed to the inside back cover; there, tucked tightly in the back of the bible was a cashier's check, the amount for that new car. It was dated the day of his graduation from school.

The words of Jesus come to mind: "He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin." The young man's greed got in the way of the gift his father was trying to give him. His father taught his son an important lesson - what matters most is God, and when you have Him, everything else is of secondary importance. That young man spent years on the run, running away from his father who wanted him to come to know the Lord.

We live in a world of people on the run—running, running, running. Many married people are running from their problems, running to the divorce courts. Countless children are on the run, running from responsibility and running to drugs and illicit sex. Society is running, running from God and the morality he wants us to live by. Running around in circles going nowhere.

On the day of John F. Kennedy's death he had prepared a speech to give in Dallas. In the text of his speech he was prepared to quote the words of Jesus, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul." For all his power and wealth, John Fitzgerald Kennedy had to face the judgment seat of God like the lowliest pauper on planet earth. No one can run from that stark reality. As the scripture says, "For every man there is an appointed time to die, and then comes the judgment. He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin, whereas he who brings himself to naught from me discovers who he is."