Johnson Laid Down His Life' for Others

people in a way that marked him as a follower of Christ, Bishop Dennis W. Hickey said at a me-morial Mass last Thursday.

And when the former president withdrew from politics it was like giving up his life for his friends, the bishop declared.

A noontime congregation at sembled on the day of Mr. Johnson's burial "in a spirit of prayer," Bishop Hickey noted, to thank God for the contributions he made in his full life to our beloved America and for raising such a man in our midst."

"Although a eulogy will be of no assistance to President John-Bishop Hickey continued, it is helpful to us who remain behind to reflect on the uniqueness of his public service. God

live among us that we may learn from their lives how we can make our contribution to the family of man.

"Lyndon Johnson had a great desire to help people as people. People to him were not just votes, numbers on the computer. lines on a graph. They were human beings — each one with a unique personality — each equal before God and man.

"Because of his love for men and women he used all his great talents to guarantee the basic rights of all citizens in the famous Civil Rights Act of 1964. It moved in this direction by the indignities suffered over the past years by his cook, a Negress.

"Medicare, federal aid to edu-

cation, reform of immigration step. Here the greatness of the laws, grants for model cities are man came through. Realizing laws, grants for model cities are but a few of the measures attri-buted to his genius — all of which were characteristically peopleoriented. It was this type of activity which Christ said would mark a man as His follower: 'By this will all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another.'

"President Johnson knew defeat as well as victory. Despite his great succession the domestic scene, peace abroad eluded him. Frustration met him at every

that his presence was becoming a divisive factor among the peo-ple he loved, sensing that peace was slipping farther and farther away, he withdrew himself from the scene.

"For a man of his great pride and love of achievement it was a most difficult decision but the great love of his country, a heroic humility and an unsellish spirit of self-sacrifice prevailed. It was in many ways his greatest hour: giving up his personal desire for the good of the people he

"There are more ways of giving up one's life than by shedding blood. Depriving oneself of one's greatest treasure is indeed a form of martyrdom and it was the Master who said 'Greater love no man hath that a man lay down his life for his friends,

life was everything and he gave up that life for his country's welfare to facilitate the achievement of peace."

BOB CONSIDINE On the Line

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For

Sunday

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Jb. 7: 1-4, 6-7. (R2) 1 Cor. 9: 16-19, 22-23. (R3) Mk. 1: 29-39.

The first chapter of St. Mark is a quick run-down of 24 hours in our Lord's public ministry: How busy each day of His must, have been! Here is a diary of just one day: He went to the synagogue to teach, there He cured a man possessed, after church He went to Peter's house for dinner, cured Peter's motherbrought him all who were ill, and those possessed by demons." "Man's life on earth is a drudgery" (R1).

Jesus' power seemed limitless. But this power had its dangers. It could spark false messianic hopes and nationalistic demonstrations. Mark indicated this danger when he wrote: "He would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him."

Ever present, too, was the temptation to capitalize on this have been for Jesus to stay in Capernaum. He had to make a critical choice: to be a wonder-worker or to be a savior. That was why He retreated to prayer, to talk things over with His Father and reaffirm His mission. Prayer is an integrating force: it helps man make sense out of

When the disciples had discovered Jesus in prayer. He detected they were succumbing to the temptation of capitalizing on His powers. "Everybody is looking for you!" they said. Precisely because everybody was seeking Him for the wrong reason. Jesus did not go back to Capernaum; instead He moved on to the neighboring villages.

We might ask, why did Jesus heal bodies? Was it to draw attention to His message? To confirm His authority? To symbolize a deeper healing of man's inner infirmities? Most certainly His healing activity had these values. But these were not the primary reasons for His

Sometimes we liken miracles to taking a dog off to a veterinarian and getting its leg healed. We think of miracles as neutral cures; things having only an apologetic value, namely, to prove Jesus was truly'God.

Early Christians did not feel they had to prove anything. They preached the resurrection and that Jesus was the Lord, because they were absolutely certain — they had been eye-witnesses! They did not need miracles to prove what they had experienced.

For them, therefore, miracles were simply a sign of Jesus' saving action. Jesus came to save man, not just his body, nor just his soul, but man himself! So His miracles touched the whole man. The people of Capernaum, and the apostles too would have had Him become a bodyhealer only. But Jesus never healed a body except to save the man. When He gave sight to the blind man, it was not just so that he could see trees and grass and buildings, but that he could see the goodness of God in a new way. When He gave strength to withered limbs, it was not just that a man could walk from here to there, but that he might take giant strides in serving God who had been so good to him.

That was why Jesus never worked a miracle unless one first had faith in Him. Before a miracle. He asked, "Do you be-lieve?" After it, he said, "Thy faith has saved thee." Where there was no faith, no opening of the heart to God, no readiness to accept Jesus as the divinely-sent Messiah, there was no miracle. Thus at Nazareth He worked no miracle, because of their unbelief.

And so for Mark a miracle was simply the Messianic mercy at work here and now. And the man cured was always the better for it. They are recounted for us, not as a memory of what Jesus did in the past, but as a ringing reminder that the same salvation will be shared with us if only we will open our hearts to it.

half-masted flags that have fluttered over the nation in memory of President Harry S Truman for nearly a month have now assumed an additional poignancy of honoring President Lyndon B. Johnson LBJ died in his native Texas, where he rose from an obscure teacher to the highest office in America.

Not since John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on the same day, July 4, 1826, has there been a precedent for the deaths of the independent little man from Independence, Missouri, and the John Wayne-like Chief Executive from the Lone Star State. President Nixon has ordered the flags dipped for another 30 days. The nation has no more ex-Presidents to underbent's job and to wish him well. Death could not have come as too great a surprise to the 64year-old Johnson. He had had a history of heart attacks for more than a decade and only recently had told William Randolph Hearst Jr., in an interview at the anytime.

His first order of business each day was to scan the lists of those killed or wounded the day before. Those dolorous figures hovered over him like a cloud and in effect, drove him out of the White House. As with Wood-row Wilson, and most of his predecessors, aging went forth for Johnson without the comforting arm of mellowness.

Just a year before he dropped his pombshell and told the world he would step aside in the hopes of clearing the way for peace. LBJ invited Marianne Means, the late Frank Conniff and this reporter to his oval office and unburdened himself for three solid hours. It was an unusual ex-

He looked deep into us as he offered his big tough hand, a probing stare that was some kind of final assessment of the conversational course he would take with us. Almost without words he motioned us to our places on the two facing divans, separated by a coffee table, that reached out from the lireplace in the walf opposite his desk.

"I didn't start this," Johnson said of the war in a voice that grew stronger and a shade angrier as the night wore on. "I inherited this It was getting more difficult not long before the full responsibility fell on me. Right in this room, when Kennedy called on Ike after the 1960 election Eisenhower told him that the big problems he was going to have as the new President would be in Southeast

Just before Dallas, Kennedy have to fight in South Vietnam, not just advise.

IBJ swung his eyes at us and there was again challenge in them. "Now, is it going to be said of me that I let Kennedy down? Am I going to be remembered as e fellow who pulled out, who Wednesday, January 31, 1973

became as scared as a rabbit in . the field?"

He did not need an answer.

"I sent ambassadors to thirty countries, tried everything," he said, frustration and anger welling in him. "They just don't want peace, don't want to negotiate now." He lingered on the "now" and then continued, "We keep the pressure on them all the time. Not too much, not too little. read here and there that they still think they're winning, but every day we show them that they aren't winning, and eventually they will realize it.

It was plain that he deeply resented what he felt were unjust accusations against and interpretations of his policy in Vietnam. Twice he picked up a phone and asked the girl in the outer office to bring in charts, graphs, and polls. His foes among the Washington columnists had that week abundantly noticed that his popularity quotient has sub-

"Yet they say I'm in a hell of a fix because I used to have a 60." he said, genuinely perplexed.

He was even more disturbed by several then-current stories that implied he had rebuffed certain overtures from the enemy to negotiate a peace. The most discussed of these stories was Eric Sevareid's article in the now defunct Look magazine detailing Ambassador Stevenson's last day, made sadder it was charged, because his transmission of peace feelers had been shortcircuited at the White

"You think Adlai or anybody else could get a peace offer and. the President, wouldn't hear about it?" he asked incredulously. "They tried to give the public the idea that I'm purposely wrong in my handling of Viet-nam. No President does what he thinks is wrong.'

LBJ looked around the room solemnly and added, "Only 35 men have reached this office in history. I don't think any of them ever willingly set out to do something wrong." His eyes fastened on the soundproofed AP and UPI teletypes faintly chattering near his desk.

'Go over there to those tickers and you can find at least six mean statements about me on the wires," he invited.

The interview turned into a monologue. He had to get many things off his chest. His resentment of the way in which the Kennedy family had poked fun or ridicule at him and his own family surfaced. "They say we don't have any style," he said of the Kennedys and their set. "Well, we've got more style," than they ever had. We're down to earth. You don't see any of those fancy dudes hanging around the White House and more, running in and out, do

He pronounced J. Edger Hoover "the greatest living American" and declared "without Hoover this country might have gone Communist 20 years ago." He ordered another Dr. Pepper, downed it like an old Western cowboy storing away a shot, and revealed that he knew of dozens of threats on his life and that White House guards had intercepted "thirteen people who managed to get over the iron

He said that of the 34 Washington columnists whose work he was familiar with, all but five were "biased against me."

It was 9:30 p.m. when he finally let us go. We went our separate ways, filled with the feeling that we had just been in the presence of the loneliest man in the nation.

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