

FR. ALBERT SHAMON

Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Is. 43: 18-19, 21-22, 24-25. (R2) 2 Cor. 1: 18-22. (R3) Mk. 2: 1-12.

This Sunday's Gospel shows us Jesus back in Capernaum. Remember in the Gospel two Sundays ago, we saw that Jesus had left this place after He had performed a battery of miracles. On that occasion Peter, and his friends, wanted Jesus to stay on at Capernaum and rest on His laurels. Jesus had other ideas. He fled Capernaum at that time to offer the people a chance to digest the import of all that He had said and done there.

The miracles of Jesus were performed not just to heal bodies, but to heal the hearts of men. Miracles showed in dramatic fashion the great goodness and love of God. Jesus restored body health in order to give the heart its health (health and salvation, both spring from the same word, *salus*.) Jesus wanted the people to get this point.

So on this occasion of His return to Capernaum, after having toured the neighboring towns of Galilee, Jesus worked two miracles for a paralyzed man. First He forgave his sins. Jews felt sickness always had some connection with sin. But nobody could see this miracle. Then He cured the bedridden man, a cure which everybody could see. By working the miracle that all could see, He proved He could work the miracle of forgiving sins, which none could see.

Again this Sunday's Readings offer further insight into sin. Last Sunday portrayed sin as leprosy. Now we see its further effects. Sin cripples man, immobilizes him, paralyzes his power to do good.

But more important, we see there is now a power on earth to forgive this ravishing disease of the heart — "the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

Mental Health Commentary

By THE DE PAUL CLINIC

At the 1971 meeting of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Ruben Rumbaut, a psychiatrist from Houston, Texas, described the founding of one of the first psychiatric hospitals in the Western World by Father Juan Jofre, a Mercedarian friar stationed in Valencia, Spain. The hospital opened in 1410 and is still in operation.

On the first Sunday of Lent in 1409 while on his way to the cathedral, Father Jofre came upon a group of people ridiculing a "madman". He dispersed the crowd and took the trembling, injured man under his protection and that day made the incident the subject of his sermon, in which he recommended that a lodging or hospital be built where the insane and innocent folk could stay so that they neither "go through the city nor harm anybody nor be harmed themselves".

A brotherhood of 100 priests, 300 laymen and 300 laywomen was formed under Father Jofre's leadership and a hospital was established under the protection of the municipality of Valencia. It was called the Hospital of Santa Maria of the Holy Martyred Innocents. In 1410 King Martin I of Spain approved this project and Pope Benedict XIII issued a papal bull on behalf of the institution. It was administered by a committee of 10 merchants.

Most patients were admitted voluntarily; the involuntary were entitled to a sanity hearing. Few ran away and not a single suicide was reported. Medication was used but only as an addition to kind care and daily work that were the basis of the program.

Male patients did farm work and learned trades. Female patients wove the linen, did the laundry and mended clothes. There was freedom of movement; relatively few patients were confined to their rooms.

Dr. Rumbaut concluded that more than five and a half centuries ago the Hospital of Innocents of Valencia conceptualized an "instrument of healing" that employed some of the basic principles of hospital psychiatry that still hold true today including, 1) "bad" men are sick; 2) treatment should be based on understanding, respect, kindness and humane care; humiliation, punishment and ridicule should be banished from a mental hospital; 3) work is a part of life and also a part of therapy; 4) isolation from the community should not be indefinitely maintained unless it is absolutely necessary, and 5) with adequate treatment, human suffering can be lessened, suicide avoided and restoration an achievable goal.

Thus a Catholic priest began a humane and enlightened tradition in the care of the mentally ill which endures today.

Questions on children's mental health should be mailed to: Mental Health Commentary, Courier-Journal, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, 14604.

Courier-Journal

God forgives sins never by ignoring them or forgetting them or pretending they never happened. In the First Reading God tells His people flatly, "You burdened me with your sins." That was why they were in slavery in Babylon. Sin enslaves. Only after they had realized what their sins were and had confessed them, did He forgive His people. And the sign of their forgiveness was the return from the Babylonian captivity.

In human life man cannot ignore sin. We need to confront our sins, understand them and have them forgiven. That is what the sacrament of Penance is all about. It is a cry, "Lord, heal my soul, for I have sinned against you" (Resp. Ps.).

If ever man needed confession, it is today. There is a book on confession called *Resistance* by Durme Weiland. It views the sacrament of Penance as the Christian's resistance to evil. The thesis of the book is that evil enshrouds us like coldness in winter. Evil is everywhere and all-pervasive. Scripture terms it "the mystery of evil." Just as one must constantly take steps against the winter cold by clothes and heat, so the Christian must be constantly fortifying himself by frequent confession against the evil that threatens to engulf him.

To prevent winter colds, doctors often prescribe plenty of sleep, food and exercise. To prevent contracting a comfortable attitude with sin in general, the practice of frequent confession is needed. Confession is not meant to be only for serious sins. It is also meant to keep the soul sensitive to the little sins which, if ignored, can lead to the big ones. Confession preserves the Christian life; and the Eucharist nourishes, the love that causes this life to break forth into Christian living. The adult needs both — frequently!



More Dancing

Preparing for St. Thomas More's annual dance to be held Saturday, Feb. 17, are, seated, Mrs. Thomas Malloy, left, and Mrs. Michael Tomaino. Standing are Mrs. Vincent Phillips, Mrs. Richard Reddington, Syl Novelli and his band will play 9-1 p.m. Tickets are available in advance or at the door.

Bosco Director Joins Committee On Handicapped

The director of the Bosco House has been named to a newly formed state-wide committee dedicated to serving the needs of the handicapped.

Sister Sheila Kennerson, RSM, who became director of the diocesan center for special religious education for the retarded last September, said the state-wide committee grew out of the need felt by diocesan educators for increased communication in this field.

At a meeting in Albany last November, she explained, "It was decided that there is a need for increased communication from the state to local levels in the area of special education and vice versa."

The representatives from the eight N.Y. dioceses that make up the special education committee, will also share information on existing diocesan programs and serve as a resource to the Catholic committee in matters of special education for the handicapped.

First on the agenda for this new committee, according to Sister Sheila, is a study of the Fleischmann Commission's recommendations concerning special education of the handicapped and possible legislation.

Home Mass Marks 60th Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin H. Schlueter celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with a Mass and dinner party Jan. 30 at their home on Pine Hill Drive, Msgr. Gerald C. Krieg, pastor of Saint Mary's Scottsville, celebrated the Eucharist for 18 guests, including four generations of the family.

Mr. Schlueter is a former superintendent for RG&E, where he worked for 45 years. Mrs. Schlueter has been active with the Service Mothers Club of Saint Salome's and the Rosary Society.

The Schlueters have two sons, Kenneth and Donald, and a daughter, Sister Dorothy, who is a member of the Sisters of Mercy and a psychologist at the Mental Health Center at Rochester General Hospital. There are four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

CYO SWIMMING

The CYO is now taking registrations for the next Co-ed Adult Learn-to-Swim Class which starts March 6. The classes are for four weeks every Tuesday and Thursday evening, 6-7 p.m. Class size will be limited so only those registered will be accepted. For further information and registration, contact CYO, 454-2030.

Wednesday, February 14, 1973

CYO TENNIS CLASS
Mrs. Ann Nealon, former individual and doubles champion of Rochester will be teaching tennis at the CYO. The co-ed classes will consist of six one hour sessions and class size will be limited to twelve per class. The first session will begin on Wednesday, March 7 and continue through Wednesday, April 11 with two classes at 6 and 7 p.m. For further information, call the CYO, 454-2030.

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