

WORD FOR SUNDAY

During this holy week, what better reading can there be than the Passion of our Lord according to the gospel written by St. Luke. As best he could, Luke smooths and retouches the story of the final earthly hours of Jesus. He avoids as is his custom, graphic descriptions of Jesus' sufferings and any strong deprecations of the disciples. The future is very much before Luke's mind. He saw the Passion of Jesus as ending one era and beginning a new one. His story of the Passion is a story of victory. From Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, Luke had witnessed the preaching of repentance and forgiveness. Thus Luke followed his gospel with a second work, namely the Acts of the Apostles — the story of the triumph of the redemption.

Because the Passion story is so long, it cannot be commented on thoroughly in so short an article. Permit me, then, to share with you some points that struck me in the Passion story.

At the Last Supper, what happened after our Lord announced that someone at table would betray Him really struck me. I could hardly believe the double reaction of the disciples. At first they began "to dispute among themselves as to which of them would do such a deed." Then in the very next instance, "a dispute arose about who should be regarded as the greatest." Isn't this typical of the perversity of the human heart!

Another incident that struck me was Jesus' prayer for Simon. I suppose He called Peter by his old name "Simon" to suggest in dramatic fashion that shortly Peter would act in a way more in accord with his old nature. He would be more like sand than rock. Jesus' words imply the deep, deep dimension of the struggle going on behind the scenes for every person. More is involved than mere human forces. Satan is a reality. He battles with Jesus for each of us. On this occasion, Satan would have liked to thrash Simon, hoping, of course, to crush him in the process. Jesus grants Satan's request. But Satan will be foiled, because Jesus takes the side of His disciple — "I have prayed for you." Peter fell, but his fall was not fatal. It simply made him better able to strengthen his brothers.

Dante called St. Luke the scriba mansuetudinis Christi — the writer of the gentleness of Christ. St. Luke, alone of the evangelists, records an incident in the Garden that reveals this beautiful trait of Jesus. When the disciples of Jesus saw what was going to happen to Him, one of them (Peter) drew a sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus would have none of this violence. He exclaimed, "Enough!" Then, in an act of gentle sympathy, he touched the ear and healed the man.

Another "exclusive" for Luke is our Lord's appearance before Herod. He seems to be telling the Christian reader that there is a kind of interest in Jesus like that of the dilettante, a mere curiosity that does not bring with it personal commitment. It draws no response from Jesus. This frustrated dilettantism can only turn into scornful rejection.

In the appearance before Pilate, Luke makes the total innocence of Jesus his principal theme. In Acts, Luke was eager to show that Roman magistrates found nothing subversive in Christianity. The trial in the Gospel clearly anticipates this preoccupation of Luke in his later work, the Acts.

Luke in his Gospel gives a large place to women. He seems to have caught enough of the

courtesy of Christ himself to spare a thought to these forgotten heroines. Their presence also illustrates one of the great sources of his gospel. The women weep for Jesus, and their tears invite us to weep for our sins. They stand by the cross and watch everything, and their contemplative attitude invites us to contemplate the Passion in like manner.

Here was not a martyr dying, for He is not merely a man. Here is the Savior of the world, for He is the Son of God. That is why we must contemplate His Passion — He died to save us!

GEM Group Sponsors Four Part Attica Series

A four-part series on the legal aftermath of the Attica rebellion will be sponsored by the Judicial Process Commission of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries in its Forum on Justice.

"Attica," a documentary film on the rebellion and the McKay commission hearings, launches the series April 10. On April 17, John P. Mansour, New York State assistant attorney general, will speak "From the Perspective of the Prosecution" dealing with the process of investigation, indictment and trial preparation.

The April 24 forum is entitled "In the Interest of an Adequate Legal Defense." It will feature Duke Johnson, a Rochester native who is one of those indicted and Charles F. Crimi, president of the

Monroe County Bar Association. The series will conclude May 1 with a treatment of "Community Responsibility for Obtaining a Fair Trial" by members of the Rochester-Attica Coalition, coordinated by Viola Brown of the education committee.

The Forum on Justice is held every Wednesday from 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 101 S. Plymouth Ave. Sandwiches may be ordered by calling 325-7727.

OUR TOWN IN NAPLES

Naples — The seniors of Naples Central School will present Our Town by Thornton Wilder in the school auditorium, April 5 and 6 at 8:15 p.m. Director is Mrs. Janice Mangini. Admission is \$1.50 at the door.

NUN APPOINTED

New York [RNS] — Sister Mary Juanita, OSF, superior general of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Mission of Mary Immaculate, Hastings, N.Y., has become the first woman religious elected to the board of trustees of the archdiocesan Catholic Charities here. A native of New York City, Sister Juanita attended Manhattan College and St. John's University and served for 26 years at the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin, Staten Island.

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It's time once again to reward the kind of teenagers who help others without any thought of reward.

You know the kind of young people we mean. The ones who really care. The ones who give of themselves. The ones who quietly go out and do something nice for someone else. Not necessarily something big, by organizational standards, but something warm. Something kind. They care, and share, and reach out, and give. You know them. Or maybe you're one of them.

We need your help

The "Youth Cares" Awards are designed to reach out and touch the kind of young people who certainly do not help others for monetary reward or recognition awards. So we need your help. We are counting on friends, neighbors, parents and others to tell us about young people within the Democrat and Chronicle-Times-Union delivery area who really care and unselfishly help others. Please use the form below to nominate a high school junior or senior you feel deserves a "Youth Cares" award. Local winners will be selected by a Youth Cares committee at each high school.

All recipients of the "Youth Cares" Awards will be guests of the Gannett Rochester Newspapers for a very full day on June 1.

Deadline for nominations: April 19



Nomination Form

I nominate _____

name _____

address _____

(Please include one 8 1/2 x 11" sheet of letter description of youth's service to others)

because _____

(Description of service to individual, group, local community)

Signature _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____ phone no _____

Send to: "Youth Cares" committee at the high school your nominee attends.