

WORD FOR SUNDAY

Father Albert Shannon

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Prv. 8:22-31 (R2) Rom. 5:1-5 (R3) Jn. 16:12-15

To Jesus, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. His chief work is to guide men to all truth. We have a special name for this bringing of God's truth to men. We call it **revelation**. Sunday's Gospel sets forth two basic principles of revelation.

First, revelation is given gradually, in proportion to man's capacity. When we wish to teach a lad algebra, we don't start with the binomial theorem. When we wish to teach geometry, we don't begin with solid geometry. We don't start with Homer's Odyssey or Cicero's Orations with beginners in Greek or Latin.

God's revelation is like that. God fits the revelation to the capacity of the learners. "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now" (R3). Thus we have a development of dogma in the Church: truths surfacing, not discernible before, as, for instance, the doctrine of indulgences.

The second principle of revelation set forth in Sunday's Gospel is that revelation is an ongoing process. When he comes, however, being the Spirit of truth he will guide you to all truth.

Divine revelation is whatever God reveals to man in a supernatural way. The old concept was that revelation was contained in propositional statements. Vatican II, however, laid the propositional theory of revelation to rest. In the Constitution on "Divine Revelation," the Council said that divine revelation includes Jesus' deeds, as well as His words. In fact the climax of divine revelation, it said, came with the events of Good Friday, Easter and Pentecost (art. 4).

This divine revelation has two stages. First, there is public revelation, rooted in historical events, like the Exodus and the life of Jesus. This revelation was partially expressed in Scripture, the creeds and dogmas of the Church. These events are basic to our faith, but not pivotal. They are the seeds, not the fruit. The fruit is faith.

But faith has to be as personal as one's birthday. Being personal,

Ousted Bishop, Pontiff Confer

Vatican City [RNS] — Roman Catholic Bishop Manuel Vieira Pinto of Nampula, Mozambique, who was ousted from the Portuguese African territory in mid-April by the fallen Lisbon government, conferred with Pope Paul at a private meeting May 27. Details of the meeting were not disclosed, but the bishop said he was "very happy" with the visit with the pontiff, which lasted more than half an hour.

Bishop Vieira Pinto and 16 Catholic missionaries (Italian and Portuguese) were expelled from Mozambique shortly before the April 25 military coup that overthrew the government of Premier Marcello Caetano. The churchmen were known to be opposed to the fallen Portuguese regime's overseas policies.

it has to be more than an intellectual assent — saying "yes" to statements. It has to be the response of person to person, like that between bride and groom. Faith is **me**, believing in **divine** Persons. Not just believing, **mind** you, but believing in **somebody**. To believe somebody is to accept his veracity, to believe in somebody is to accept the person himself.

The only way we come to believe in somebody is to get to know him, not just his name and address, but him intimately, as a husband does his wife and a wife her husband.

For this reason, revelation cannot be just a past event. Revelation must be also something present, continuing to happen here and now to each of us personally. That is why we must be open to life and living — to discover God, to experience the realities hidden behind the truths of our faith. Such insightful discoveries, such experiences we might well label personal or private revelation — the second stage.

Our response to such revelation will not be something purely intellectual, an assent to truths long ago hammered out into a creed by believers (creedal faith), but a deep personal conviction that erupts into a life of faith, an act of **me** believing (personal faith).

Consider the doctrine of the Trinity. You will find it in the Scripture. Reading One speaks of God's eternal Word, Reading Two speaks of the Holy Spirit, Reading Three of the Father. To say I believe in the Trinity, that there are three Persons who are one God, is creedal faith. But to say this, after having discovered the Wisdom of God through suffering, the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer, and the loving concern of the Father in providing for us in a dire time of need is to experience the reality behind the truth of faith and to be able to have personal faith.

Incidentally, the realization that divine revelation is more than a yes to statements has rendered the old catechism approach to teaching religion obsolete. Christ is not to be found in statements of the past, however sacred. Statements of the past are basic to faith, but the task of teaching religion is to make students aware that Christ is still present among us, acting.

"We must open their eyes," wrote Father Farrell, "and unstop their ears, so that they can discover him at the center of their vital experience. This makes religion teaching a whole new ball game." (Theology for Parents and Teachers, p. 17)

Games Seen Educational Tool

Games people play in church? That's right. Approximately 30 adults involved in religious education took part in the third ecumenical Sharing Session — "Games People Play in Church." They discovered that games can still be fun and what's more can be used in the learning process for all ages.

Rev. Frank Poole, pastor of the Union Presbyterian Church in Scottsville, played "host" for the games at the Third Presbyterian Church. He suggested that games be incorporated into religious

activities to make "learning fun." "The Puritans made a dichotomy between work and play. Children believe that education is work and sometimes think they can stop learning after school is completed. Work and play must be a unity so that the learning process continues throughout life," he said.

adolescents. Participants are part of a committee to choose the mother of the year and attempt to define the qualities that they seek in a mother.

COORDINATOR SOUGHT

Spencerport — St. John's religious education board is taking applications for the post of religious education coordinator for the parish. Persons interested may contact the rectory at 352-5481.

DR. FOLEY HONORED

Dr. Alice L. Foley, president of Nazareth College of Rochester, was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at Keuka College's 66th Commencement Sunday, May 26.

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