

WORD FOR SUNDAY

Sunday's Readings: (R1) Is. 66: 18-21 (R2) Hebr. 12: 5-7, 11-13 (R3) Lk. 13: 22-30

"Lord," someone asked Jesus, "are they few in number who are to be saved?" A stupid question! Yet, much of Sunday's readings answer it. A single Pharisee posed the question. The answer hit all the Pharisees. The question asked if only a few are saved. The answer warned that many may be lost. The question was idle and speculative. The answer urged immediate action and endeavor. "Try (the Greek word means 'strive,' 'agonize') to come in" (R3).

"How many will be saved — few or many? What is the point of such a question anyway? The Pharisee, asking the question, assumed he would be saved because he was a Jew. It was compensatory thinking. At the



Essay Winner

Margaret Mary Ochs, a Bishop Kearney High School graduate and recent winner of a state-wide essay contest sponsored by the Catholic Daughters of America, recently took another \$25 prize. Her essay took 3rd place honors in the division I essay contest at the Catholic Daughters' National Convention in Los Angeles the week of June 22.

Pope Greets President

Castelgandolfo [RNS] — Pope Paul has sent his "prayerful good wishes" to President Gerald R. Ford.

In a message to the 38th U.S. president, following inauguration ceremonies on Aug. 9, the Pope said:

"As you accede to the Presidency of the United States of America, we assure you of our prayerful good wishes and we gladly invoke upon you and the beloved American people an abundance of guiding and strengthening blessings."

The message, sent from the papal Summer Residence here, was the first official Vatican reaction to the change of leadership in the United States.

time of Jesus, the Jews were a subject people. How the Roman yoke galled them! They comforted themselves in the thought that they would be honored guests at the Messianic banquet, whereas the Gentiles would be shut out, wailing and grinding their teeth out of sheer frustration.

The question of how many are saved was irrelevant. So Jesus answered the questioner, not his question. The questioner had assumed he was saved. Jesus torpedoed the assumption — no one is saved simply by the accident of birth into the Jewish nation. Jesus warned the Jews that they might be doubly mortified: they might see themselves excluded and the hated Gentiles included.

Jesus admitted that the door to salvation was narrow indeed. But the narrowness was of man's, not God's, making. The Pharisees, not God, had made salvation a matter of birth and of observance of a mountain of impossible laws. As a matter of fact, no door would ever have been wide enough for a nation grown so big in its own conceits. God's standards differ from man's; there are bound to be many surprises. At the time of judgment, the door will be slammed shut. No pleading will avail. Whether the saved be few or many is none of our concern. Our business is to "try and come in through the narrow door."

What are narrow doors? **Narrow doors are our beginnings and continuance.** Yet once we pass through narrow doors, we come out into the wide open spaces. Narrow doors open to wide rooms. To journey from the cold north of Europe to the smiling lands of sunny Italy, one must first thread narrow Alpine passes. How hard it is to master music. Narrow is the door — hours and hours of unending practice. However, successfully passed through, the wonderful world of music opens up to the musician. To learn to spell; to read, how narrow the door — the grind, the seemingly interminable grind, of the grammar! Afterwards, the joy of being able to write anything and to roam through the vast realms of literature.

So the door to salvation is narrow. It begins with renunciation. "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself." It demands steadfastness. "And take up his cross daily." Saints enter the narrow door. The cross holds no terror for them. However, they differ from so many of us in their continuance. They seldom vacillate. As the compass needle points always in one direction, so their wills are always aligned to God's will, no matter how much the Lord scourges or disciplines (R2).

We, on the contrary, find self-renunciation too narrow a door. Or should we open it, we fail to pass through it. Like the weathervane, our endeavor changes with every wind of circumstance: one day eager and brave, the next not caring to try, we change with the changing sky.

Two doors stand before us — only two doors. Two destinies, and only two. One leads to life, the other to death. We must choose one. The narrow door?

Prelate Urges 'Tolerance' For Nixon

New Orleans, La. [RNS] — Calling for understanding and tolerance for former President Richard M. Nixon, Archbishop Philip M. Hannan of New Orleans, has asked the American people to get on with the business of the country.

"There is no exaltation in the office of the President of the United States — sorrow is the proper word," Archbishop Hannan said in a pastoral letter, as he quoted late President Harry S. Truman.

On the resignation of Mr. Nixon, the archbishop said, "in the end it was not the Congress, the elected representatives of the people, but the people themselves who forced the resignation of the President."

He added that "now is the time for us to show our moral greatness by a demonstration of unity in regard to our principles. We must refuse to confuse justice with vengeance. While it is absolutely necessary to have

equality for all, before the law and in education, business, and politics, it is equally necessary not to have a vendetta."

"Let us get on with the work of the nation," he declared. "We must provide leadership for the free world and discharge our duty of stewardship in helping our needy neighbors around the world. We cannot do it by endless self-abasement and scourging nor by endless litigation."

"We have become a great nation by our cooperative action. We can stay great only by continuing our cooperation and unity. We fervently implore the blessing of God upon our new President and all our officials, past and present," the archbishop said.

The pastoral letter related the struggle of the founding fathers of America in their decision on a single chief executive. Despite warnings by Virginia's Edmund Randolph that such a decision would be "the fetus of monarchy," Alexander Hamilton defended the president as not being a true king.

The President "would be amenable to personal punish-

ment and disgrace," Hamilton said, and a king would not.

The archbishop went on to say that during the tenure of Andrew Jackson the president evolved as "the representative of the American people."

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Makarios Deplores Turkish Invasion

London [RNS] — Following Turkey's new offensive on Cyprus (Aug. 14), Archbishop Makarios, whose ouster as president of the island republic led to the Turkish invasion on July 20, called on the big powers to rescue Cyprus from "barbarous Turkish aggression."

Only hours after collapse of peace talks in Geneva, Turkish forces on Cyprus launched a heavy air and ground attack and began to push outward from their northern salient in what appeared to be a drive to seize control of all of northern Cyprus, from Morphou or Kokkina Bay in the northwest to Famagusta on the east coast.

Archbishop Makarios, who is still recognized by Britain as President of Cyprus, issued a statement from his hotel in London accusing Turkey of trying to achieve by "brutal force" what it could not achieve in Geneva by "blackmail" and "gunboat diplomacy."

Among the world reactions to the outbreak of fighting were the following:

—Pope Paul warned that the Cyprus conflict could spread and involve other nations in what he called "bloody and disastrous struggles." He pleaded for an end to the belief that international problems can be solved "only by war and violence."

—Greece announced a decision to withdraw her armed forces from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a 15-nation Western defense alliance, and threatened to demand removal of all U.S. military installations in Greece.

—The United States, publicly deploring the use of force by Turkey, warned both Turkey and Greece that if they go to war over Cyprus, the U.S. will cut off military aid to both. The U.S. called for an immediate cease-fire and resumption of peace talks.

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