



Oratory Winner

Sarah Reetz, a senior at Canandaigua Academy, won the Region 8 finals of Knights of Columbus Oratorical Contest. She will now compete in the state finals at the Concord Hotel May 7. The winner will receive a \$2,000 scholarship; second, \$1,500; third, \$1,200. The topic is The American Revolution, Myth or Miracle. With Miss Reetz are Matt Yaninas, left, auxiliary chairman for Youth Activities, and David Connelly, grand knight of the Knights' Canandaigua Council 11445.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 20:19-31; (R1) Acts 4:32-35; (R2) 1 Jn. 5:1-6.

In St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles, there are three progress reports (2:42-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16). Each one is positioned right after a coming of the Holy Spirit. The reason why St. Luke did this was to demonstrate that the unity of the Christian community and its witness to the faith were the effects of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

Sunday's first reading gives the second progress report. This report shows how great was the unity effected by the Holy Spirit among the early Christians — they started sharing their material goods freely with one another! Such a communal style of living was both easy and logical when Christians believed the second coming of Christ to be imminent. Why amass wealth if one were to leave it soon? Their theology was right, but their chronology was wrong.

St. John wrote his gospel near the end of the first century. Nearly seventy years has passed since the resurrection of Jesus. The first fervor of the Christian community was definitely waning. The style of life described in Luke's Acts could not be kept up. In fact, community sharing did not seem to be very successful (Acts 6:1; 1 Cor. 11:21) and other churches constantly had to send voluntary help to Jerusalem. Christians had begun to realize that they had to contend with living their faith, not just for a few years, but for a lifetime! To bolster such a faith, that would buttress a lifetime of Christian living, was why John wrote his gospel.

His gospel was not an exhaustive record of Jesus' life, but a selection of certain words and works of Jesus that would confirm believers in their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, so that through this faith they might have life in His name — eternal life!

That is why John, of all the evangelists, alone tells the story of the doubting Thomas. His doubts, observed St. Gregory, strengthen

our faith more than the ready acceptance of all the other apostles. He demanded exacting proof and every sort of experimental test, besides clinging stubbornly to his doubts for an entire week.

Furthermore, when Thomas' doubts were shattered, he made the most explicit profession of faith in the divinity of Jesus recorded in the gospels. His "My Lord and my God" was not an exclamation, nor a vocative; it was a double confession of the divinity of Christ. His words were an elliptical sentence, having the subject and predicate "You are" understood. "You are my God," was what Thomas was really saying. In other words, "As far as I'm concerned, this is it — you are God!"

Thomas represented the Christian community at the end of the first century. Thomas is each one of us. For we are asked to believe Jesus is risen and lives today in His mystical body, the Church. Yet the very things Thomas asked to see in order to remove his doubts often cause our doubts. We wonder, can the Church still be the body of Christ when it fails to live the communal life, as described in Acts, wholeheartedly and for the long run? Do its wounds of sinfulness and failure scandalize us?

Was it not precisely the wounds — the nail and spear prints — that convinced Thomas of the divinity of Christ? Ought not the wounds of sin convince us of the truth of the Church? For the Church does with those wounds what Jesus did with His. She touches them and transfigures them and raises the sinner from his death to walk anew — an Easter man! Because she has the power to do this, she has the Spirit of Jesus, she is the body of Him who is our Lord and God.

Fisher Presents Expert on Nazis

Dr. William Allen, a specialist in the Nazi period of German history, will speak at St. John Fisher College at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 23. His topic: "Goebbels' Propaganda in Nazi Germany—How Effective Was It?" The lecture, in Basil Hall auditorium, is free and open to the public.

Dr. Allen, a history professor at SUNY Buffalo since 1970, has written several books on Nazi Germany and numerous articles on the German resistance, multi-national theories of fascism, and the Socialist underground in Nazi Germany. He has studied at the Free University of Berlin and the University of Göttingen in West Germany. He received the Ph.D. degree from the University of Minnesota in 1962 and has taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Missouri, and Wayne State University.

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