



Happy Daisies

Mrs. Elizabeth DeMarse, 20 years the secretary at Holy Cross School, got a surprise recently. On the occasion of her anniversary with the school, one child from each class presented her with a white daisy and cards from the classmembers. Mrs.

DeMarse also was presented with a daisy corsage by Sister Elizabeth Anne, RSM, principal. Above, Mrs. DeMarse, Sister Elizabeth and pupils Jeanne Kelly, grade one; Sean Melder, grade two; and Mary Jean Sementino, grade three.

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 13:31-35. (R1) Acts 14:21-27. (R2) Rev. 21:1-5.

"God is glorified in the Son of Man," wrote St. John (R3). We might ask, "How is God glorified in the Son of Man?" The Liturgy answers, by the conversion of the Gentiles (R1) and by the new Jerusalem, the Church (R2).

The first reading narrates the conclusion of Paul's first missionary journey. This mission began from Antioch in Syria. From there Paul and Barnabas sailed west to the island of Cyprus, then north to Perga in Asia Minor. Next they trudged over 100 miles through robber-infested mountain passes to Antioch in Pisidia, then 81 miles southeast to Iconium, then 25 miles more to Lystra (where Paul was stoned almost to death). Finally, they went 30 miles to Derbe. From Derbe Paul and Barnabas could have taken a shortcut home to Antioch in Syria. Instead they backtracked and revisited all the places to which they had been. The journey covered over 500 miles on foot and took four years (from 45 to 49 A.D.).

Why did Paul and Barnabas return to the places they had evangelized, since they had been driven out of them by violent persecution? They returned for the sole purpose of strengthening the churches they had founded there.

They did this in two ways. First by establishing a hierarchy. "In each church they installed elders." It is significant that they (Paul and Barnabas), not the Christian community, created the hierarchy! Secondly, they strengthened them by their words. One thing Paul had learned in spreading the gospel was that somebody had to pay the cost in suffering. "We must undergo many trials if we are to enter into the reign of God" (cp. 2 Tm. 3:11). It is a law of life. The brightest scarf that heaven makes is thrown over the shoulders of a storm. Life can no more be all sunshine than a picture can be all light and no shadows.

When Paul and Barnabas reported to their home base in Syrian Antioch; they did not dwell on the difficulties of their journey. Instead they focused on their gains. They "related all that God had helped them accomplish"; how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles — the door shut by the Jews.

Paul's and Barnabas' works had ushered in a new order. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away. No longer was salvation only for the Jews, no longer were death and sin supreme. A new Jerusalem was here, not the old with its bloody sacrifices and exclusivism, but a Church established by God ("come down from heaven"). In her God dwells among men, making all things new, changing relationships between God and men, altering society itself — causing anxiety to give way to trust, crime to virtue, enmity to love. "The sea" (which divides nations and separates peoples, and in which the demons of darkness were thought to dwell) "was no longer." For all are one in Christ.

Long after World War II, Japanese soldiers hid themselves for a long time in the Philippines, because they thought the war was still going on. These desperate men kept hiding and fleeing because they did not know the former things had passed away.

The author of Revelations warns us not to live according to the past. What is past is past. Writing in the midst of persecution, he sought to rally Christians to the values of the new age, the values of the Church.

Do we live in the world as formerly? By the law of survival of the fittest — every man for himself? Or do we live and labor for a city that has foundations? Do we live by trust and reconciliation, by love and friendship, by being just and merciful, by caring for the poor, the oppressed, the sick — the new values? "I give you a new commandment."

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Insights in Liturgy

God as Mother? — A Biblical Reflection

By ADELITA MENGES

How appropriate it is to talk about God on Mother's Day is not immediately clear. Yet should we not examine in the light of Biblical faith our worship of God? Have we made for ourselves a graven image: God, all masculine, all male?

The Scriptures teach that God is not a glorified human being, male or female. "I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst" (Hos. 11.9). "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord" (Is. 55.8). It is this understanding that governs the use of either masculine or feminine metaphor in Scripture.

(Ms. Menges is coordinator for Adult Religious Education at Blessed Sacrament Parish and a member of the Rochester Regional Task Force on Women in the Church.)

In Israel's patriarchal culture, the masculine pronoun was used regularly to denote God. In Scripture, however, there are many qualities of God that are reflected with decidedly feminine imagery. Feminine imagery illustrates the nature of God's relationship to Israel in the Exodus and Wanderings. God is like a mother to Israel who provides food and drink for pilgrim Israel in the desert.

In utter exasperation,

Moses poses this rhetorical question of the Lord: "Did I conceive all these people? Did I bring them forth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries the suckling child to the land which thou didst swear to give to their fathers?'" (Num. 11.12). No, it was God that conceived Israel.

Second Isaiah also depicts God liberating Israel from Babylon as a woman giving birth to a child: "How I will cry out like a woman in travail, I will gasp and pant..." (42.14). Third Isaiah further employs the maternal metaphor for God: "Shall I who causes to bring forth shut the womb? says your God," (66.9).

"As one whom his mother

comforts so I will comfort you," also is in Third Isaiah (66.13). It is within this tradition of God as the mother of Israel that Jesus in the Gospel of Luke depicts himself calling to his unheeding people: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather you children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you refused!" (13.34).

The biblical witness, with its rich mixture of masculine and feminine symbol, exhorts us to obey the commandment to make no graven images (Ex. 20.4). We witness in Scripture God acting as Mother and Father, creating and redeeming, giving birth to and protecting Israel. Yet God is not male or female. These are all symbols, metaphors that we can use to describe the way God acts toward us.

On Mother's Day, then, it is fitting that we should pause to reflect on the Scriptural revelation of God as Mother. God taught Israel to walk, lavished love on this people and fed them (Hos. 11. 1-4). In our human experience, it is often our mothers who perform such caring acts for us. Why should we exclude this maternal quality from our own understanding of God?

Surely there are those of us who long to know a loving and tender God who delights in our joys and comforts us in our sufferings.

LONGHORN'S 20TH

Father Paul Wohrab, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, will be host May 20 to Longhorn District scouters' 20th annual dinner. The dinner is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. in the parish school. Leo Hannan is general chairman. Father Albert Gaelens, CSB, chairman of the nominating committee and a former district chairman, will present candidates for office. Awards will be made to the volunteer Boy Scout leaders of the area.

COURIER-CALENDAR

- Evening Vigil** — Tomorrow at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 4530 St. Paul, 7:30-11:15 p.m., with Mass at 8:15.
- Living Rosary** — May 14 at St. Salome's, 4282 Culver, beginning at 7 p.m. and followed by Mass.
- Special Retreat** — For young college alumni, men and women, May 20-21 at Notre Dame Retreat House. Details: Very Rev. Thomas F. Schmidt, Box 342, Canandaigua, 716-394-5700.
- Womens Interfaith Coalition** — Wednesday, May 11 meeting at Colgate Rochester, 1100 S. Goodman, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Dr. Richard A. Henshaw, professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages, on Historical Roots of the Middle East.
- Forum on Justice** — Discussion by three members of Coalition for Battered Women, 12:15-1:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 11, 101 S. Plymouth.
- Vital Issues** — History Professor John Crandall, SUC Brockport, on The Age of Mass Leisure, 12:05-12:55 p.m. Tuesday, May 10, Rundel Library, 115 S. South Avenue.
- Auction** — Sponsored by Court Fitzsimons, CDA, and Ladies Guild of St. Rose Church, 1 p.m. Saturday, May 21, on church grounds in Lima. Used household equipment, also, bake sale, refreshments. Proceeds for charity, religious education. For pickup of donations: 624-3065 of 582-1275.
- Spring Festival** — At St. James Church hall, Brett Road, Friday and Saturday, May 6,7, from 6:30 until 11 p.m.; also, 1-4 Saturday, with food service throughout.
- Arts and Crafts Fair** — Juried show by 50 area artists, Saturday, May 14, 40 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 6, at South Presbyterian Church, 4 E. Henrietta Road. Wandering musicians, NTID mimes and acrobats, culinary arts exhibit, children's creative workshop, snack bar, babysitting, plus arts and crafts demonstrations and sales. Admission free.
- Stained Glass Demonstration** — By Valerie O'Hara, 3 p.m. Sunday, May 8, Memorial Art Gallery.
- Liederkrantz** — Choral society's annual celebration, 8:15 p.m. Saturday, May 14, Mother of Sorrows hall, Mt. Read at Latta; food and drink, singing and dancing afterward.
- Rochester Philharmonic** — Final concert in Pittsford series, rescheduled from January, 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 8, Pittsford-Mendon High School. Isaiah Jackson conducts orchestra and 500 members of school district bands, choruses and orchestras.
- Musical Comedy** — A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, 8 p.m. May 6 and 7, 13 and 14, National Technical Institute for the Deaf theater, RIT campus.
- Classic Film Series** — Great Expectations, by Charles Dickens, 2 and 8 p.m. tomorrow, Rochester Museum.
- Videotape Show** — Colorado Video, by Steven McCambridge of Fisher College, 7:30 p.m. tomorrow at Portable Channel, 8 Prince St; free.

Calendar items should be mailed to the Courier-Journal Calendar Desk, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. Deadline is Wednesday noon, one week ahead of the publication date.

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