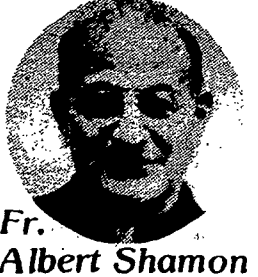


**WORD FOR SUNDAY**



Fr. Albert Shamon

**Sunday's Readings:** (R3) Jn. 20:19-23. (R1) Acts 2:1-11. (R2) 1 Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13.

Originally, Pentecost was a harvest festival, celebrated on a Sunday, fifty days after the Passover.

Since the feast always fell on the third month, it coincided with the events that took place on Mt. Sinai after the Exodus. As a result, by the second century B.C., the feast of Pentecost became the feast of the Law, celebrating the "harvesting" of the fruits of the Exodus, namely, the creation of God's people by the covenant made on Mt. Sinai.

St. Luke saw the Christian Pentecost as the creation of a new Israel. So he modeled his account of this event after that in Exodus 19. Thus there was noise, wind and fire. But the likeness stopped there. On Sinai God gave only the Law; here He was giving His Holy Spirit. There He called only the Hebrews to be His people; here the call went out to all people.

Luke's description is magnificent. The Spirit

comes suddenly. God works in secret over long periods of time, then all of a sudden He is there! "Suddenly there came a noise."

Though God works quietly, yet the results of His working are not silent. John the Baptist and Paul generated their fire and thunder in the silence of deserts, yet their "noise" shook the world.

The noise on Pentecost seemed that of a strong, driving wind. Both in Greek and Hebrew the word for Spirit and wind (or breath) is the same. The wind is free: it blows where it wills. It is strong: uprooting rotting trees and blowing down dead branches from living ones. It is gentle: cooling and refreshing on a hot summer's day. Similarly, God's Spirit is free, strong, gentle, and more — as the breath of God, He is creative. "Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth."

Next, tongues as of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. First there was one ball of fire with flaming tongues flapping and snapping in the driving wind. Then the fireball fragmented and a flaming tongue rested on each in the house. Like the halo artists draw around heads to signify sanctity, the flaming tongue spoke eloquently that each was now Spirit-filled. Thus empowered, their tongues would become mightier than pen or sword. Their preaching would not ring hollow and harsh like a booming gong, but would,

like fire, penetrate hearts, purify and transform them.

The speaking in tongues was not addressed to the people to instruct them. Rather it was simply unintelligible, ecstatic language addressed to God, praising Him for His works and wonders done through Jesus.

St. Luke, however, disciple of Paul as he was, interpreted the speaking in tongues as a symbol that the Gospel is meant for all nations, that the Church even at its birth was catholic and universal.

Why did St. John describe the coming of the Spirit on Easter day (R3) and not on Pentecost Sunday like Luke? St. John wished to show that the newness of life of the risen Christ can become man's through the creative breath of the Spirit given through the sacraments of the Church, especially the sacrament of reconciliation. St. Luke, on the contrary, was more concerned with the universal mission of the Church. So he positioned Pentecost after the Ascension of our Lord. For only after the Ascension had made it clear to the apostles that God's Kingdom was not of this world were they ready for the evangelization of the world.

God generally does not wait for the slow processes of man to convert the world. He has a mighty force in reserve — His Spirit. The first Pentecost resulted from nine days of intensive prayer with Mary. The Spirit waits only for the fervent prayers of God's people to burst upon the world again to change it!

**War Veteran**

The Catholic War Veterans of Monroe County nominated James F. Nagle of East Rochester Assemblyman from New York State's 135th District, as the 1976 Catholic Layman of the year. He was recognized for his

many services to church and community at a breakfast held in his honor at the Town and Country Theater. The affair was attended by family, friends and members of the Catholic War Veterans and Auxiliary.

**Poetry Seminar**

On April 27, Nazareth Academy students were guests at Nazareth College where they attended a lecture by Richard Wordsworth, great grandson of the poet William Wordsworth.

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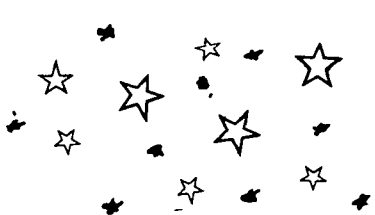
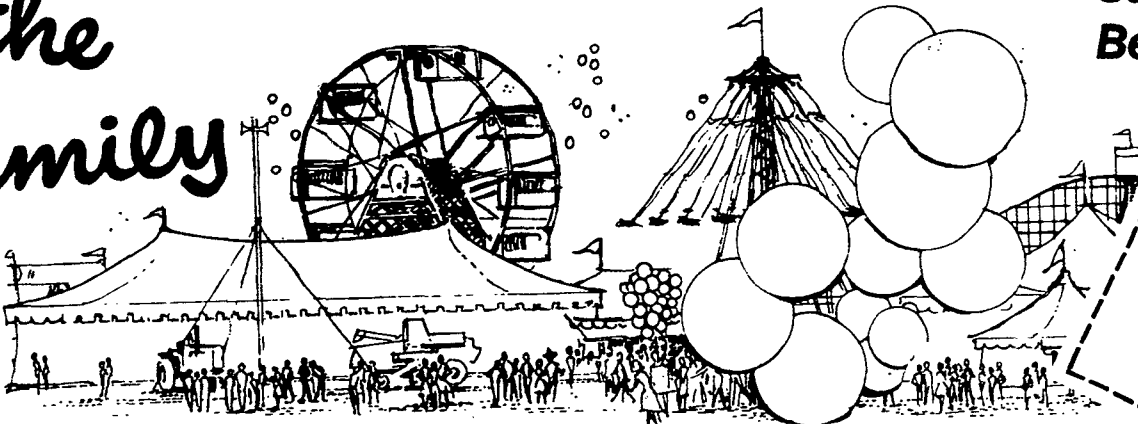
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