

WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk 15:1-32; (R1) Ex 32:7-11, 13-14 (R2) 1 Tim. 1:12-17

The theme of Sunday's readings is God's mercy toward sinners

The first reading tells of God's anger at Israel after they had worshipped the golden calf. We can hardly imagine today how hellish slave life was three thousand years ago. Even Roots did not capture the awfulness of slavery in a pagan world. And yet after God had delivered Israel from pagan slavery, she fashioned a golden calf and worshipped it in His stead. God was moved to destroy Israel for such base ingratitude. But Moses prayed. And God forgave Israel as though nothing had happened. The ease with which God forgave Israel struck me. Did it strike you?

St. Paul persecuted the Church. He was blasphemous. Though he partially excused himself, yet he was not wholly guiltless. His blindness after his experience on the road to Damascus symbolized his own willful blindness. The voice on the road affirmed as much when it said to him, "It is hard to kick against the goad." Saul had been resisting grace. Yet God forgave him.

In the gospel, the beautiful fifteenth chapter of Luke, which is often called "a gospel within a gospel," exemplifies God's mercy toward sinners by three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son.

Here is a little test: how did you feel about the gospel parables, about the more joy over sinners than over the good? About the ease with which God forgave Israel? And Paul? Did you think God was a bit unfair? Did you more or less agree with the older brother of the Prodigal Son? The prodigal son wasn't much of a lad anyways, was he? The only reason why he came home was simply to get room and board. He truly was a sinner.

I must admit that once I tell the stories a bit unfair. Why I did is perhaps because I had whittled God down to my own image and likeness, had been making a golden calf of him. No man can imagine God as He really is. He surpasses the human mind. Luijpen wrote a book about God and titled it "What Can We Say about God except God?" It's true, isn't it? We can't describe God, nor imagine Him. Any

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descriptive word, any image would only distort the notion of God. The only person who could adequately express God is the Word of God: Jesus Christ Himself. And He said God is not at all like what we think He is. He said God is a Father, a Father who loves us so much that He forgives us even when we don't deserve it.

This is truly a tremendous truth—God is kinder than men. We would have written Israel off long ago; and Saul, and the prodigal. But God did not. Instead He went in search of the lost sheep and coin. Christianity differs from other world religions precisely in this, that pagans search for their gods, but our God searches for us. Francis Thompson dared call God "the Hound of Heaven," pursuing us relentlessly with deliberate speed, majestic instance.

Once the remark in the gospel that God rejoices more over sinners than over the good puzzled me. Then one day I read that the gospel didn't say God loves sinners more. He only rejoices over their conversion more. Because God so gladly forgives, it is easier for the sinner to come back to God than to face the criticism of men. If sinners get sad, if a sinning world despairs, is it not too often because man has made a golden calf, cut God down to man-size?

Yet the love of God is broader—than the measure of man's mind;—And the heart of the Eternal—is most wonderfully kind.

Faith in such a God can generate only hope for scarlet sinners and for a sinning world. And shouldn't hope burst into wonder, praise and eucharist or thanksgiving?

ALL IN THE FAMILY



Sarah Child

The head of the house returned from Europe recently with an Italian cookbook containing authentic recipes of that country according to region.

Delighted when he presented it to me, I was even more delighted when I discovered that it was printed exclusively in Italian with not a word of English to mar its purity.

Not knowing any more than a word or two of Italian, I saw this as an ideal way to learn it, motivated as I would be to decode the very thick volume in order to prepare mouth-watering delicacies as only Italians can.

My first move was to buy an Italian-English dictionary. The second was to brush up on my high school Spanish. Similarities in word roots would furnish clues, I thought.

And so I began. I was charmed to discover that cinnamon in Italian is cannella, not so charmed to find out that nutmeg is noce moscata. It did and continues to look like night mosquito to me. (Noches is the Spanish word for evening.) This can be distracting when, for example, you are translating a recipe for cassata (cream cake) and after deciphering

ingredients in turn you can't dispel the image of a dessert laced with insects.

There are other problems with trying to utilize my little bit of Spanish. I confused lavare which means to wash both in Spanish and Italian with lasciare which when coupled with cadere means to drop. There is quite a difference, you may agree, in "washing" the ricotta and "dropping" it through a sieve into a bowl.

There are other problems. None of our Italian dictionaries give a clue as to what the difference is between zucchero (sugar), zucchero semolato and zucchero al velo. Any help would be much appreciated.

Thus far I have translated four recipes, prepared and served one labeled Rigatoni alla Pastora.

Succinctly, it is simply cooked sweet Italian sausage combined with ricotta and poured over hot, buttered macaroni.

The cookbook purchaser and I thought it different and pleasant. The kids were singularly unenthusiastic until the oldest went to the fridge, found some leftover spaghetti sauce and ladled it liberally over the bland-looking dish and discovered she had created a mutant of a familiar dish. "Lasagna," yelled a sibling. Ah, squisita!

K OF C CEREMONY

Our Lady of the Cenacle Council 3892 will play host to two other area Knights of Columbus councils Sept. 14 for installation of officers. The ceremony is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in Mother of Sorrows Church, Mt. Read at Latta. District Deputy John M. Morphy will be assisted by Warden James J. Philippone, PCK, in installing new officers of the

Greece group, Council 4691 of Irondequoit and Council 4812 of Henrietta. Dinner will follow, in the Empire Room of Barry's Restaurant, 4370 Dewey.

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