

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Focus On the Spirit

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 14:15-21, (R1) Acts 8:5-8, (R2) 1 Pt. 3:15-18.

From now until Pentecost, the liturgy focuses our attention on another gift of the risen Christ: the Holy Spirit. The by-product of this gift is joy. "Let all the earth cry out to God with joy" (Response).

Our Lord had the nicest way of putting things. He cushioned the shock of His coming departure on the apostles by promising them, "I will not leave you orphaned." Now orphans are little children, without parents, dependent on the charity of others. When we think of it, the apostles at the last supper behaved not as little children, but like big kids. They had entered the supper room arguing who was to be the greatest—"the king of the mountain." They made all kinds of rash promises that they could not keep. When things got really tough, they panicked like frightened kids and ran away.

The reason why they had not grown up was that they had been simply onlookers of Jesus. He did everything. They weren't even involved. They were watchers, spectators, of their Master as He created a minor tornado around the countryside.

Only after the Master had left did they begin to grow up. They began to experience the same life Christ did. They proclaimed the Messiah in Samaria, worked miracles and suffered persecution (R2) just as Jesus had. Only now, they didn't act like kids, because He had not left them orphaned. He had given them the Spirit.

Our Lord had not only the nicest way of putting things, but also the nicest way of doing them. He had promised to remain with them and us; and he does this through His Holy Spirit. But He would remain in a way we could easily understand: through signs and sacraments. After all, the only way we can communicate is through sign-language. Our Lord took the ordinary stuff of everyday life to give us His Spirit. Thus Peter and John went to Samaria, and they "imposed hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (R1).

In the Church the imposition of hands quickly became Christ's sign or sacrament by which His power—His

life—was handed down. Philip's work was evidently incomplete without the Holy Spirit given by the authority of the "Twelve." In Sunday's reading the Samaritans are "confirmed" in the Spirit.

In the Church today the laying on of hands is becoming more common, especially in prayer groups. But on such occasions, the gesture is usually a sign of solidarity and mutual support in prayer.

In the sacraments, however, it signifies the laying down of the Holy Spirit. In the sacrament of reconciliation, the priest imposes hands in the forgiveness of sins. It is a sign of the work of the Spirit in the heart of the penitent.

Within the Mass, the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine before the consecration and asks God's Holy Spirit to transform our gifts. When a person is confirmed or a priest is ordained, there is the same laying on of hands.

All the sacraments are personal meetings with Christ, who gives His Holy Spirit to those who receive Him with faith.

"I will not leave you orphaned," our Lord promised. He certainly didn't.

Charities to Sponsor Foreign Social Workers

Catholic Family Center, a division of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester, has "volunteered to serve as host agency for two social workers (one from France, one from Austria) during the coming summer," according to a news release.

Miss Catherine Wobus, casework director for CFC, said that the two workers are coming to Rochester to "gain experience with the whole range of services that we deal with," and to "study concepts of social work in the United States."

The two social workers, Johannes M. Muller, 27, of Vienna, Austria and Celine J. Richard, 30, of Lille, France, are both degreed social workers and now work for their country's social welfare agencies.

Catholic Family Center is working jointly with the Council of International Programs of Cleveland, Ohio, on the project. Both agencies will share the living expenses for the two.

Miss Wobus added that positions on the exchange program are highly contested so that only the "brightest, highly motivated people" are chosen.

Catholic Family Center is looking for volunteer families who would provide the students room and board for one of three periods during the summer (June 5-25, June 25-July 16, and July 16-Aug. 10).

The two will be working at

the CFC in downtown Rochester so volunteer homes should be within Monroe County.

Anyone interested in the

project may contact Catherine Wobus or James Maloney at the Catholic Family Center, 50 Chestnut St., Rochester, 14604, 546-7220.

Human Rights Topic of Talk

Jose Benancourte and Evelio Perez-Albuerne, co-chairmen of the Diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission, will be the guest speakers at St. Bernard's Seminary, 2260 Lake Ave., 7:30 p.m.,

Thursday, April 27.

Their subject will be human rights. Their talk is sponsored by the Spiritual Life-Liturgy Committee at the seminary. It is open to the public.

Some Thoughts to Consider

By Ed Sulewski

Not all people express their grief in the same manner. One may need to cry freely. Another will get by with few tears. One may find it healing to take a long walk where he can talk or cry it out alone or with his God. Another will talk or cry it out with man. The point is: When a person suffers, he must find some honest expression that is natural for him. He must find his own method of resolving his grief. One of the most important periods of adjustment occurs after the funeral is over and the house suddenly becomes lonely and desolate. This is another time for us to demonstrate that even though individuals may die, family and friends still remain. People often need other people to help them return to the main stream of life. Continue to visit with friends following the funeral. No. 15

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The Church 1978

By Father Andrew Greeley

Church Study Is Depressing

I will confess that I am somewhat irked by the Gallup-Catholic Press Association study of the state of American Catholicism.

Fr. Greeley

I am not irked because the CPA commissioned the study, or because they chose Gallup to do it. It is, after all, a free market and people can purchase their research from anybody they want. Nor am I upset because the Gallup findings are at odds with previously reported National Opinion Research Center findings. When people come up to me and say, "How do you explain the fact that Gallup proves you wrong?" my response is that Gallup does not prove us wrong, that given the different wordings of some questions, the Gallup research confirms our own findings rather than refutes them.

The only difference I can find between the Gallup and NORC findings is that the former notes an upturn in church attendance while we have yet to record such an upturn. However, even this is not a real difference, because it is our practice not to report either an increase or a decrease in church at-

tendance until the change has been sustained for two years, since we are somewhat skeptical of the durability of year-to-year variations.

Nor am I irked because Mr. Gallup has chosen to insist that his research represents "good news" for the Church. The issue here is whether one chooses to say the glass is half-empty or half-full. Our report was that although large numbers of Catholics still define themselves as Catholics, and affiliate with the Church in many different ways, they reject the Church's right to teach them in certain critical areas, such as race and sex, and this is bad news for the Church. Mr. Gallup reverses the rhetoric and says that although many Catholics reject the Church's right to be a definitive teacher, nonetheless they still affiliate with the Church and engage in many different forms of religious behavior, and this is good news for the Church. Both statements are true; there is no contradiction between them. I leave it to Church leadership whether they react joyously or not to the thought that some four fifths of their membership reject the teaching of the encyclical, "Humanae Vitae."

What frosts me about the Gallup/CPA study is rather its resolute inattention to previous NORC research on the same subject. There is nothing in the Gallup/CPA report that

we did not anticipate three years ago. This does not mean that their report should not have been done, or is worthless; it does mean, however, that intellectual honesty, scholarly integrity and human graciousness would seem to demand that they acknowledge the existence of previously reported NORC research. We always carefully footnote Mr. Gallup's finding in our work, and I do not think I am unjustifiably affronted when he and the Catholic Press Association ignore our work.

There was one appalling lapse of professionalism in the Gallup survey. A question was asked about whether Latin Mass should be PERMITTED in the parish of the respondent. Sixty-seven percent agreed, much to the delight of Catholic traditionalists and to the misunderstanding of the secular press. The Chicago TRIBUNE, for example, headlined the story, "Most Catholics Favor Latin Mass." I am simply astonished that the Gallup organization did not think to ask whether the respondents preferred the English or the Latin Mass. Or was someone at Gallup or the CPA loading the dice?

In any event, and for the record, 87 percent of the Catholics in the country approve of the English liturgy. They are true pluralists, in other words. They'll permit the Latin Mass, but they like the English Mass. Perhaps that's a distinction too subtle for the Gallup folks to grasp.

Camp Directors Named

Camp Stella Maris announced last week that James Willsey, a first theologian from St. Bernard's Seminary, and Sister Nancy Kelly, a teacher at Notre Dame High School, Elmira, will head up the 1978 camp season. Mr. Frank DiSano, also a first theologian at St. Bernard's, will direct the Counselor-in-Training program.

Ray Tette, Stella Maris' executive director, said that the new Counselor-in-Training program, designed for 15-year-olds interested in becoming Camp Counselors, offers "a unique in-depth leadership opportunity." There is still room for a few more interested boys or girls. Anyone interested may call the camp office, (716)454-2636.

TV Mass

Father Bernard J. Power, C.S.S.R., will celebrate the Mass for Shut-ins to be telecast over WHEC-TV, Channel 10, at 8 a.m., Sunday, April 20.

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