

Insights In Liturgy Is Confirmation Too 'Rite Centered'?

In the fall of 1977 the Confirmation Task Force, after two years of shared study and research, went on the road with five diocesan workshops. The road, as we had anticipated, was not a smooth one. Our approach to Confirmation did not meet with immediate acceptance or overwhelming enthusiasm. Indeed, in some instances, the reactions could not have been any stronger if we had come out in favor of sin! In most

instances, however, our remarks were met with thoughtful reflection and fruitful dialogue. A number of "problems" came to light that needed serious consideration.

One of the most widely expressed difficulties that surfaced in the workshops was the problem of catechesis. Presenting Confirmation as a sacrament of Initiation would require a total rethinking of our

catechetical program. We could no longer "use" Confirmation as a means of "keeping our youth coming" for catechetical instructions. A formidable club would be removed from our catechetical arsenal. We would have to move from an almost exclusively child-centered catechesis to one that would be adult-oriented as well.

Such a shift in emphasis was seen by many as a serious problem that would adversely affect our catechetical effectiveness. Yet the very problem would seem to highlight a serious weakness in our present catechetical structure. Our catechesis

for too long a time has been "rite-centered"; we have been preparing young people for the celebration of a sacramental rite, when we should have been preparing them for an ever deeper involvement in the living of the Christian life.

A more realistic program of Catechesis would be one directed toward helping the whole Church — adults as well as children — to live the constant, on-going process of conversion that is inherent in the Christian commitment.

Catechesis would be seen as a life-long involvement in catechetical instruction that, coupled

with liturgical experiences and Christian service would enable the whole community of the Church to live the Christian life to fullest capacity. Catechesis would be directed not simply toward a "captive audience" but to the entire body of the faithful.

A "rite-oriented" catechesis would be replaced by a "Christian-life" catechesis. Catechesis would become a total community involvement, with as yet unexplored advantages for the Church. In such a context, the Sunday Eucharist, rather than Confirmation, would emerge as the sacrament that expresses our growth in Christian maturity.

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

We Should Pray Also For Others

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 15:21-28. (R1) Is. 56:1, 6-7. (R2) Rom. 11:13-15, 29-32.

God's love extends to everybody, regardless of class, color, creed. Only one thing does God ask of all—faith! That is the gist of next Sunday's readings.



On television there is a program called Wonder Woman. Single-handedly, Wonder Woman puts to flight the enemies of law and order. In Sunday's gospel we

meet another "wonder woman"—a Canaanite mother, whose faith drove a devil back into hell.

Well might many a woman today in our so-called Christian civilization wonder at this woman. They would kill their unborn babies, but this Canaanite, this pagan of an accursed race, left no stone unturned to save her daughter from demonic trouble. She overleaped her centuries-old hatred and sought help from the inveterate enemy of her people—a Jew.

But more wonderful than her love was her faith. Her faith caused even Jesus to wonder. Somehow she had heard about Him. "Son of David," they were calling him. "Messiah." Perhaps He was. Anyway, she was desperate. She

would try, no matter what. "Lord, Son of David, have pity on me," she kept crying out. "My daughter is terribly troubled by a demon."

But He said nothing! A woman crying can soften the heart of the hardest man, but a mother crying—and for an afflicted daughter! How could Jesus, how could any man, keep silent? Yet He did. Not in contempt. He was Man, remember. His Father's mission was to the Jews first. She was a Canaanite. Jesus was perplexed as to His course of action.

As He was thinking this out, His disciples intervened in the woman's behalf. They asked Him to grant her request—just to get rid of her. Jesus then shared with them what was on His mind: "My mission is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Before they could

proffer a solution, "wonder woman" leapt into the breach. She had sensed Jesus' indecision. So adoring Him, she pleaded, "Help me, Lord! If you won't help my daughter, help me, because I am literally at the end of my rope."

Yet Jesus wanted to resolve the problem still on His mind, so He banded words with her. He quoted a proverb: "You don't give the children's food to lap dogs." Quick as a flash, "wonder woman" retorted with another proverb: "Even pet dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from the master's table." In what esteem she held Jesus—to cast a devil out is a great thing, but she believed that for Him it was only a crumb to give.

Again, as in the case of the centurion, Jesus surrendered, as He always does, to great faith!

Once the disciples asked

Jesus, "Teach us how to pray." I believe this "wonder woman" can.

Prayer, first, is the expression of a great need to Jesus.

Secondly, delays are not denials. God often permits them, because we are apt to value only that which costs much effort. The great painting requires multitudinous strokes of the brush. As exercise toughens the body, so persevering prayer deepens faith.

Lastly, we ought to pray for others that they be delivered from evil, demonic evil so rampant in today's world. For we are, are we not, all children of the same Father?

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Blue Army Sets 3-day Pilgrimage

A bus trip to Washington, N.J. for the consecration of the new Immaculate Heart of Mary Shrine has been extended to three days, Mary Kelly announced last week. Buses will leave the Holy Rosary parking lot at 7 a.m. Friday, Oct. 13, and return Oct. 15.

The Mass of dedication will be celebrated Oct. 13 by Bishop John Venancio, former bishop of Fatima and current international president of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima. Msgr. Charles Murphy, national president, will give the welcoming address.

En route to New Jersey, the pilgrims will stop at Wyalusing and at an Allentown shrine established by St. John Neumann, Mrs. Kelly said. On Saturday morning they will go to Philadelphia to visit the saint's old church, that of St. Peter the Apostle. Anyone interested in joining this excursion may call Mrs. Kelly at 586-1664, or Carol Leary, 621-8106. Mrs. Kelly announced also an Aug. 26 tour to Wyalusing, reservations for which may be made through 254-3485 or 865-7891.

NFP

The Natural Family Planning office will begin a teacher training course in October. Couples who use the NFP method and are willing to teach it to others are asked to call Therese Petracca at 464-8705.

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