

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

The Church Will Never Lead Astray

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 16:13-20. (R1) Is. 22:15, 19-23. (R2) Rom. 11:33-36.

In next Sunday's gospel, Jesus asks two questions: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" "And you, who do you (the apostles, the Church) say that I am?"



The people said He was John the Baptizer, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. They thought He was the reincarnation of one of the prophets. Where there is little faith there is always much talk of reincarnation! Witness modern man's renewed interest in metempsychosis, Hinduism, Buddhism.

But the people were wrong.

What do people say today about abortion?

What do people say today about artificial contraception?

What do people say today about divorce?

What do people say today about smoking pot?

What do people say today about drunkenness?

What do people say today about women's ordination?

What do people say today about the election of the Pope?

You know what people are saying?

They are saying just exactly the opposite of what the Church is saying.

And who is right? Who was right 2,000 years ago at Caesarea Philippi—the people or Peter?

Who do you think is right today—popular opinion or the Church?

Popular opinion was wrong then! Why should we think it can be right now? Especially, especially since our Lord said, "Blest are you, Simon son of John! No mere man has revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father."

Our Lord was saying that in matters of faith and morals, popular opinion is not enough, nor polls, nor common sense, nor logic—

"no mere man!" Truth in faith and morals needs divine enlightenment, help from above.

And to whom has this help been promised? To the people? Or to Peter? "On this rock (petrum) I will build my Church; and the jaws of death shall not prevail against it."

The first reading tells us the kind of office Jesus promised Peter. It was like Shebna's. Shebna was major-domo of King Hezekiah's palace. That meant being second only to the king; all the keys to the palace rooms and treasury were in his hands.

To entrust the keys of the kingdom to Peter was to make him second only to the King of kings. And because he was, all the King's power would be behind him and the jaws of death would not prevail against him. The devil, like a roaring lion, would never devour the Kingdom either by error from within (one jaw) or by persecution from without (the other jaw).

How thankful we should be to belong to a Church divinely guided and protected!

We ought to listen to that Church, for she will never lead astray.

We ought to pray for Pope Paul VI and especially for one another that we have the courage to follow, not popular opinion but Peter always!

Insights in Liturgy

By MSGR. WILLIAM H. SHANNON

The Problem Of Original Sin

The Confirmation Task Force, in presenting its position on Confirmation as a part of the rite of Christian Initiation, suggested four possible options that might be followed in the Church:

1) Having the total rite of initiation at infancy (the present practice of the Eastern Churches);

2) Receiving the infant into the catechumenate and then celebrating the total initiation rite when the child is judged to be ready for it;

3) Having a naming ceremony in infancy, receiving the child into the catechumenate at the age of six or seven and then having the total initiation rite when the child is judged to be ready for it; or

4) Having infant baptism (as presently), then Confirmation at an early age (e.g. Seven) but before Holy Communion.

This last option preserves the proper order of the Sacraments of initiation, but not their organic unity.

A number of people attending the workshops expressed the opinion that, while they could see definite advantages in options 2 and 3, option 1 was probably the most

feasible, because it would ensure the remission of original sin in infancy, whereas options 2 and 3 would not.

This reaction suggests the need of re-examining our understanding of original sin. It is worth noting that the remission of original sin, which has loomed so prominently in our understanding of Baptism, receives little emphasis in the new rites of Baptism. The only reference to the remission of original sin in the rite of infant Baptism is in a single prayer—and the prayer is an optional part of the rite. The emphasis in the baptismal rites now used in the Church is that Baptism is a celebration of faith and the first step toward initiation into the community of faith. In the case of an adult, Baptism celebrates the faith of that adult; in the case of an infant, Baptism celebrates the faith of the family and of the community.

Original sin, many theologians are saying today, is not so much a matter of heredity (and therefore, something that has to be washed away), but a matter of environment (and therefore something we need help to overcome). It is not so much something we are born with as something we are born into. It is the environment of evil in the world: a condition of alienation and selfishness built up by the abuse of human freedom and added to by our own sinfulness.

We cannot escape from it by our own efforts; we can only be delivered from it by the grace of Jesus Christ. Our deliverance from it is not an instantaneous experience, but the gradual result of a life-time conversion.

Significantly, there is in the Sacramentary a special rite of Christian burial for an infant who dies without Baptism. This rite may include the beautiful preface which speaks so eloquently of Christian hope in a life of happiness that comes to a Christian who dies: "Life is changed, it is not taken away." In using this rite of Christian burial for infants who die without Baptism, the Church is telling us that original sin, however we describe it, does not shut the door to God's presence to those who for some reason have died without Baptism. There may be many misgivings that people may have about putting the total initiation rite at a later age in a child's life. At least there need not be the fear that the redemptive love of Jesus would fail to embrace a child who died before he was initiated into the Church. Listen to the beautiful opening prayer in the funeral Mass of a child who dies before Baptism:

"Father of all consolation, from whom nothing is hidden you know the faith of these parents who mourn the death of their child. May they find comfort in knowing that he (she) is entrusted to your loving care. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ."

BUSINESS NEWS

Thomas W. Banaszewski, director of business and finance at St. Bernard's Seminary, has been elected to the executive committee of the Seminary Management Association for 1978-1980. He will serve as treasurer. The next meeting of the organization will be in St. Louis in 1979.

Robert L. Laird, a Catholic Charities trustee and treasurer of the diocesan Office of Black Ministries, has been appointed administrator of the microbiology department of the University of Rochester Medical Center. He formerly worked for the Catholic Youth Organization as an associate director.

Deaths

Hazel Wachter

The Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Hazel Wachter on Aug. 10 in Holy Apostles Church by her grandson, Father David Heinsler. Mrs. Wachter died Aug. 8, 1978, at the age of 85.

Concelebrating with Father Heinsler were Msgr. Emmett Murphy and Fathers Robert Meng and William Gall. Also in the sanctuary were Fathers Albert Oscar, Thomas Corbett and Walter Kohl. On Aug. 19, Msgr. Murphy, Holy Apostles pastor, offered a memorial Mass.

Mrs. Wachter lived at Lakeview Apartments. She was the widow of William Wachter, a city fireman for 37 years. She was president of the Ladies Auxiliary 126 of the Knights of St. John of Holy Apostles Church, past president of the parish Rosary Society and of the Police and Firemen's Auxiliary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Survivors include four daughters and a son, Mrs. William (Betty) Heinsler, Mrs. Judson (Olga) Chatterton, Mrs. Hedley (Doris) Herbert, Mrs. John Raymond (Kathleen) Smith and William Heinsler, 22 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

SOME THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

"The Funeral" By Ed Sulewski

When someone dies, the two to four-day period of the funeral begins. The first formal acknowledgement is the wake—or viewing of the body of the deceased. This visitation period, usually in the funeral home, is of great emotional value to the family of the deceased. By your presence and comfort, you express to the family how much their loved one meant to you, and how much they will be missed. This visitation is followed by a funeral service which is, for many, a time of spiritual reaffirmation.

Following the funeral service, the body is committed to its final resting place in a grave, mausoleum, or crematory.

The days of the funeral serve several purposes—to help the family accept the fact of the death, to allow friends and relatives to express their sympathy and, finally, to become a final tribute for the deceased.

There is no single prescribed form for any part of the funeral—and the desires of the family are always given preference. If there are any questions we can answer about our services, we would be glad to do so.

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