

On The Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

He Gave Us The Church As Our Guide

You write so strongly about the Catholic Church that you give the impression you are opposed to Bible reading.



Strange impression. I think I write Fr. Cuddy with clarity, carefully choosing the word to best express the idea in mind. My dictionary is worn out getting the nuances of words. Probably the problem with those who have the problem of understanding is subjective. They do not heed what I write, but are so wrapped up in their preconceptions of what they imagine I would be saying, they often quite misunderstand and misrepresent what is being said.

Will you state clearly what you think of Bible reading and study?

Gladly, Bible reading and study should be approached with the same humility that a medical student approaches his teachers and text books. But with the Bible we have two added notes: supernatural reverence, and prayerfulness. Cardinal John Henry Newman said we should read the Bible as prayer. The Bible should be read with that humility which recognizes the intricacies of these inspired books: a recognition of the need to study reliable exegetes and spiritual authors; and with an openness to whatever

inspirations the Holy Spirit might choose to give. But always we regard the guidance of the Church.

Why such emphasis on the Church if the Bible is the Word of God?

Because Christ established the Church as the teacher of the faithful. "Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the world." People can get tripped up in private interpretation. Mr. Will Whalen, a specialist on Christian denominations separated from the Catholic Church, concludes there are about ninety different interpretations of the four words: "This is Body." Do you think Christ left us without a guide as to what is His will, and what is the meaning of the Eucharist? No. He gave us the Church as our guide.

But the Bible is the Word of God.

Of course. And a medical text is a book of teachings from eminent doctors and scientists. However it requires some expertise to understand a complicated medical book. Likewise it requires some expertise to understand a book as complicated as the Bible. Here is a simple example. I knew a couple who got on the band wagon of Bible reading when it began to be the "in" thing. They were making themselves ridiculous by some of their interpretations. One day I thought: "Well, let's get a bit of humility into this act." So I asked: "St. Luke, in the Benedictus (Lk. 1:60) writes: "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us

Do you know what is meant by the horn?" Now to most Americans who know their own idiom, a horn is a tooter, or a cornucopia. With some embarrassment, these two who so bravely were opening the mysteries of the Bible to others admitted: "no." "Well, it is a Hebraism which means power and strength. I did not get that directly from the Holy Spirit, but from a study of authors who are skilled in semitic languages, oriental literature, Jewish customs. Even with them there has to be guidance from the Church." Rather than being pleased to have learned something new and correct, the two who considered themselves some special instruments of the Holy Spirit were resentful.

For the pious who want the Bible for devotion I do not think technical studies of the Scriptures very helpful. While Bultman, Barth, Kahler, Renan, Brownie and Barnabas Ahern, who do not eat off the same side of the Scriptural plate, may be interesting and helpful to the scholar, excepting for Ahern and a few others I do not think such scholars helpful to the ordinary devout reader of the Bible.

Any recommendations?

Abp. Sheen always recommends Daily Bible Studies, a set of 17 small volumes by a Protestant scripture scholar, Dr. William Barclay. He has a bit of error running through, but most faithful Catholics would recognize that. After all, if Barclay taught all as the Church teaches he would have become a Catholic. But now he is dead (RIP), and may God bless him for the splendid contributions he has given through his works.

Birthday Party for Father Eisemann

An Oktoberfest at the Hof Brau House on Lyell Avenue has been arranged by the Rosary Society of Holy Family Parish in celebration

of Father Frederick Eisemann's birthday. The party is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 11, and

reservations should be made by Oct. 8 with Mrs. William Ciafre, 328-9157, or Mrs. Robert Spahn, 235-3136.

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Items Sought For Assisi Garage Sale

To raise some money for their anniversary celebration next year, the people of St. Francis of Assisi Church have scheduled a garage sale for this weekend. Donations of furniture, appliances, household equipment generally, would be appreciated. Anyone who wishes to give may call 436-6693 to arrange pickup service. The sale, at Whitney and Campbell streets, is set for Saturday, Oct. 7, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, 9-4.

The 50th anniversary celebration will include a Mass, followed by a dinner-dance on Oct. 7, 1979. The committee has planned a number of preliminary events and hopes to get in touch with former parishioners through publicizing the program.

Engaged Encounter

An Engaged Encounter Weekend is scheduled to begin Oct. 6 at Divine Word Seminary, Conesus. This may be substituted for the Pre-Gana instruction usually required of engaged couples.

Fr. Mason Here

Father James Mason, CSSR, will preach a Weekend of Christian Growth at the Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal, Oct. 13-15. The Toronto-based Redemptorist is widely known in both Canada and the U.S. as an advocate of a healthy self-love

being the means to love of God and neighbor. The weekend opens at 6 p.m. on Friday and closes at 3 p.m. on Sunday. Information and reservations may be obtained by calling Sister Ann Dowd at the Cenacle, (716) 271-8755.



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