

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Always Be Prepared

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt.25:1-13. (R1) 1 Thes. 4:13-18. (R1) Wis.6:12-16. (R2) 1 Thes.4:13-18.

I received a few letters on my article of Oct. 11, 1978. That column was on Matthew's parables of the Wedding Feast and the Wedding Garment (Mt. 22:1-14). What occasioned the letters was my interpretation of the wedding garment.

One reader sent me a clipping from a Catholic paper titled Liturgical

Reflections. I quote the priest-author: "Then as each guest entered for the feast he was given special clothing — a simple long white 'dress' or robe. For one thing, this assured equality of treatment among the guests. It helped bring about a 'party spirit' as well. The white robe also cut down on 'party crashers.'"

Another reader wrote: "Noting your question as to how one fetched off the streets could be expected to be dressed for a wedding, I recalled that someplace I have read that it was the custom for the lord of the feast to provide the wedding garment. Do you think this could be correct?"

First of all, no less an authority than W.F.

Albright has said that no such custom (of handing robes to wedding guests) existed in the East as far as he knew. "It is fruitless," he wrote, "to discuss whether there was a custom demanding that the giver of a wedding feast had an obligation to provide special clothing. No such custom is known to us..." (Anchor edition, Matthew, p. 269).

Heinrich Kahlefeld, in his book Parables and Instructions in the Gospels, says that to try and solve the problem of the man with no wedding garment by stating that these were issued to invited guests and that the guilty party had refused to accept one is a gratuitous assumption that has no basis in the text. "Such information is presumed and has no support in the text" (p. 99).

The text says, "The servants went out into the byroads and rounded up

everyone they met, bad as well as good" (Mt. 22:10). Thus Father Wansbrough, OSB, stated: "The parable represents the time of the Church up to the last judgment. Matthew insists on the mixed character (good and bad) of the members of the Church and the coming Judgment. He wishes to show that mere faith, by which one adheres to Christ in His Church, is not enough; the works of love, too, are required" (A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, #733j).

The wedding garment, therefore, is symbolic of goodness. The man was ejected because he was bad; and he was bad, not because he refused an article of apparel. Would it not have been just a trifle extreme or quite disproportionate to bind a man hand and foot and throw him out into the night to wail and grind his teeth — for a breach of etiquette?

As in the parable of the Wedding Feast, "those who were invited were unfit to come," so the man without a wedding garment represents those unfit to sit at the king's table, not because they had refused a robe, but because they lacked the works of love.

The theme of next Sunday's readings is much like the U.S. Coast Guard motto: Semper Paratus (Always Prepared), only more imperative — Always Be Prepared. Be prepared, because the Lord comes when we least expect Him. The best preparation is constant prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments. If we are faithful to these two resolves, then we shall at the time of death be able to say, like Cardinal Wiseman, "I feel like a schoolboy going home for the holidays."

Corpus Christi Notes 90

Among the events honoring the 90th anniversary of Corpus Christi Church this year, is the publication of a booklet which recounts the history of the church on East Main Street in Rochester. Entitled The Perennial Spring, the book also recounts, briefly, the story of the two educational institutions which were associated with the parish, the parish school and St. Agnes Institute.

The first building, a church-school combination, was dedicated on Nov. 4, 1888. It is this date that the parish celebrates this year.

Father James J. Leary was the founding pastor. He served until 1901, when Msgr. Dennis J. Curran assumed the pastorate. It was Msgr. Curran who saw the present church constructed.

He was followed by Msgr. John Francis O'Hern, later to be Bishop of Rochester.

In 1929, Msgr. William Hart was named pastor, a post he held for more than 30 years. In 1955, Msgr. John E. Maney was named administrator of the parish. After Msgr. Hart died, Msgr. Maney was named pastor.

In 1976, Father Joseph W. Dailey was named administrator of the parish, to be followed a year later by Father James B. Callan in that post.

Annual Party Will Aid Area's Deaf

The Catholic Deaf Apostolate in the diocese will be aided in its programs by the Loyal Christian Benefit Association, when that body holds its annual Card Party at St. Anne's School Hall on Friday, Nov. 17.

According to Father Thomas Erdle, diocesan chaplain to the deaf, proceeds from party will help support programs for the Catholic deaf.

A \$1.50 donation is asked for the party which begins at 7:30 p.m.



Seton Charity Ball

The Seton Charity Ball Nov. 18 at the Americana will be a money-raiser for the neuroscience unit that is being put together at St. Mary's Hospital. Here, Mrs. Theodore Mac Donald, who heads the ball committee, gets some technical information from Dr. Richard Brzustowicz, chairman of the neurological surgery division at St. Mary's. Seton funds will refurbish the hospital area chosen for the 25-bed unit.

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