

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Before Christ Life Was All Drudgery

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 1:29-39. (R1) Jb. 7:1-4, 6-7. (R2) 1 Cor. 9:16-19, 22-23.

On TV whenever a producer wants to make one person stand out, he uses contrast. Everyone else is dressed in black and the hero in white. Sunday's liturgy uses contrast to highlight what Christ brought to this earth on Christmas.



Fr. Shamon contrast to highlight what Christ brought to this earth on Christmas.

The first reading depicts life before Christ. Bleak it was — harsh and cold as

iron. "Is not man's life on earth a drudgery?" asked Job. His days those of a hireling or slave? The hireling worked only for wages. His work was boring, was endured just to get wages.

And the slave? Before Christ, the slave's lot was unbelievably cruel. Under the scourge he labored from dawn to darkness and was denied even shade from the hot Eastern sun. Aristotle wrote that "a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave." In other words, a slave was no better than a thing. In Roman law, he had no rights. A master could ill treat him, even kill him if he chose. It was a matter of no importance to anyone if a slave suffered or died. Varro, a Roman writer on agriculture, divided farm instruments into "the articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the cattle, and the mute,

comprising wagons and tools." The only difference between a slave and a beast or a cart was that the slave could speak. Before Christ, Job likened man's days to the life of a slave.

And man's nights? They were like those of a sick man. For the ailing, nights drag on interminably; whereas the days fly by like a weaver's shuttle. Life is like that, said Job. Before Christ, little happiness, little joy, little laughter!

C.S. Lewis in The Chronicles of Narnia depicted the earth without Christ as "winter always with no Christmas!"

Into this hopeless world, Christ came to bring hope. Can we not imagine the boundless hope and joy He must have brought to Capernaum that evening when He cured so many of the sick and possessed there!

And yet to cure the sick and to drive out demons was not why He had come. Curing men's bodily ills would not necessarily make them happy. Nor

would it bring them to God. Miracles failed to bring Capernaum to Jesus (Mt. 11:23f)

But Jesus was so compassionate, He was mightily tempted to focus on the bodily ills of men. He was tempted, as are some today, to reduce the gospel to social welfare (which deals only with problems, not with persons). So did what He always did when He had a problem: He got up early and prayed to His Father in secret. When Simon and his companions managed to track Him down, He had resolved the problem through prayer. He refused to go back to Capernaum, even though everyone was looking for Him. "Let us move on..." He said, "so that I may proclaim the good news (in other villages). That is what I have come to do."

To proclaim the good news — a new vision, a new hope — namely, that in Him, with Him and through Him we can take this life with its sobs, sniffles and smiles and use it to win eternal happiness.

Council Installs Members

Eight new members of the St. John Fisher Council 3676 of the Knights of Columbus received the First Degree of the order recently in a ceremony at St. Jerome's Church in East Rochester.

Beauchamp, Joseph Beauchamp, Cliff Joslin, Don Ihrman, Art Brady and Father William Leone.

Outside officers present were Joseph Fox, district deputy, of Webster, William Haus and Jack Fee.

The new members are Philip Beauchamp, Frank Barbero, Everett Trambley, Frank Scumaci, Matthew Indiano, Peter Castro, Timothy Blackmore and Angelo Lisuzzo.

The degree was given by John Carli, grand knight; Gordon Vogt, Gerard

Deadline

Deadline for news copy for the Courier-Journal is noon Thursday, the week before the Wednesday publication date.

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Calendar

HOLY GHOST CHURCH— Card party Tuesday, Feb. 6, 8 p.m., in church hall, sponsored by Sacred Heart Society; tickets \$1.50 from Rose Ann Bennett, 247-2970, or Ann Donner, 247-3135.

OUR LADY OF VICTORY— ST. JOSEPH'S— Archconfraternity of the Holy Family: 9 a.m. Mass Sun Feb. 4; breakfast at Holiday Inn.

FOCUS ON THE EUCHARIST— At Holy Apostles, with Father Benedict Ehmman, 7:30 p.m. tomorrow, Feb. 1; Mass at 8:15.

TOMORROW IS NOT FAR AWAY— Special program on aging presented by representatives of local social agencies, 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 4, museum building, Rochester Museum and Science Center; free with regular admission ticket.

CLASSIC FILMS— Thursdays, 2 and 8 p.m., Rochester Museum's Eisenhart Auditorium. Tomorrow: Scarlet Pimpernel (1935).

STAR SHOWS FOR PRESCHOOLERS— Friday, Feb. 2, Strasenburgh Planetarium: Magic Sky, 9:50 a.m.; Wonderful Rocket, 10:40 a.m.

ROCHESTER PHILHARMONIC— With Sperry High School Chorus, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9 at school.

GEVA ONSTAGE— Eugene O'Neill's A Moon for the Misbegotten: Feb. 1-4, 6-11, 13-18. Box office 716-232-1366.

GEVA ON TOUR— Free performances offered to community organizations. Bookings through Jane Barish, 232-1366. Starting Feb. 6: The Goose Girl, by

Bill Burnett for young audiences; later, Yankee Moonlight, by Laurence Carr.

ROCHESTER COMMUNITY PLAYERS— Playhouse Junior presents The Cat Princess Feb. 9-11 in Monroe Community College Theatre, Building 4. Curtain 7:30 p.m. Friday, 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday, Sunday.

EASTMAN DENTAL CENTER— Atrium Gallery show of watercolors by John Haldoupis, through March 9.

RIT CARY LIBRARY— "Calligrapher's Choice" show through Feb. 7. Open 9-5 Monday-Wednesday; 9-9 Thursday, Friday; noon-5 Saturday, Sunday.

LUNCHTIME LECTURE— At Memorial Art Gallery tomorrow, Feb. 1, by Langdon Clay on an early Gainsborough in gallery collection; 12:15 p.m., coffee and tea available.

MUSIC AT NOON-TIME— At Hochstein School, 50 N. Plymouth, Wednesdays, 12:15 p.m. Today, Noval Trio plays Mendelssohn's D Minor; Feb. 7, Tremont Quartet, music by Wolf, Bartok. Doors open 11:30.

NOVELS AT NOON— At RIT Downtown, 50 W. Main, alternate Thursdays. Tomorrow, Melodie Monahan talks about Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles; 12:10-12:50 p.m.

ROCHESTER CULINARY CLUB— Honoring "Chef of the Year," Joseph Balzano at public dinner to benefit American Heart Association, 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12 at Party House, Beahan Road; \$10 tickets through association office, 461-5590, or from club members.

SYLVIA DAVIS— Art exhibition preview Feb. 3, 5-7 p.m., Casa Italiana; Nazareth College; free. Show runs Feb. 5-March 5, Monday-Friday, 10-4; free.

NAZARETH FACULTY ART— Showing in main lobby, Nazareth Arts Center, through Feb. 25,

Monday-Friday, 9-9; Saturday, Sunday, noon-5; opening ceremonies 8 p.m. Feb. 3. Free.

ITALIAN FILM FESTIVAL— The Red Desert (Antonioni, with English subtitles) Feb. 4, 3-5 p.m., Dryden Theatre; \$1.50 at door. Sponsored by Casa Italiana and International Museum of Photography, Eastman House.

SENIOR CITIZEN MATINEES— Spiral Staircase, 1946 melodrama, 1:30 tomorrow afternoon, Dryden Theatre, Eastman House.

SPAGHETTI DINNER— "All you can eat," in school hall, St. Joseph's, 39 Gebhardt Rd., Penfield, 1-5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 4; \$3.50 and \$1.75.

VALENTINE DANCE— Johnny Capone and band Feb. 10, Holy Family Auditorium, 9-1; light buffet, continental breakfast. Information, \$5 tickets: Wamsler, 328-6377, Campione, 458-3617.

DISCO DANCE— Feb. 10, 8-11 p.m., at Monroe County Fairgrounds, Bldg. 1; sponsored by Youth Against Cancer Committee as benefit for American Cancer Society, Monroe County Unit. Features DJ Ron Denver. Advance tickets \$2, at schools or through society, 461-3800; at door \$2.50.

PUERTO RICAN ARTS & CULTURAL CENTER— Argentinian film Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m., 938 Clifford (544-6047); photography by Lourencia Daughters, Ecuador; Saints and Pagans, on exhibit at 946 Clifford, Feb. 1-28; conversational Spanish course Monday nights, Feb. 26-April 30 — enrollment limited to 10, application deadline Feb. 23.

CYO PROGRAM SERVICES— Workshops for adult youth leaders, professional or volunteer — a series at \$5 per. Feb. 6; Determining Youth Needs; registration at CYO, 50 Chestnut, Rochester, 14604, or by telephone, (716)454-2030.

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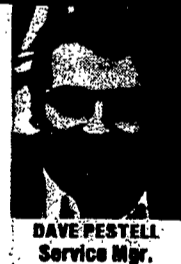
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