

On the Right Side

By Father Paul J. Cuddy

Evangelizing Expedition In Midtown

The Rochester Legion of Mary had a booth at Midtown Mall July 9-14. They invited me to come, to be available for questions. One noon at the booth, I met a beautiful collegian, about 22 years old,



who had quit the Church. "If you have time, let's have coffee." We sat at a table for half an hour, discussing. She is intelligent and good, but her lack of knowledge about the Faith left me with a heavy heart, reflecting: "This girl is typical of thousands of young Catholics who, excepting in a vague exhortative way from the pulpit, are not expected by us shepherds to share the Faith with others." I promised to send her books, and here is the covering letter: "Let me introduce myself. I am the fat, old priest you

met at Midtown Mall. We had coffee and a fine conversation together. I assembled your promised books, and forthwith lost your address. It just showed up, three weeks later. So your books are en route. Living the Catholic Faith, by Abp. Whealon is for you and your sister. The reason Catholics slip away is they don't understand the treasure they have in the Catholic Faith. An added reason is they are not asked to do anything to spread the Faith, as the Witnesses and the Mormons do theirs. The little Treasury of Prayers is for you. I am adding an extra for your sister. Acceptance is for your father. Me, Myself and You, also by Father Collins, is for your

mother. So you all have books. Maybe you would put up a shelf and engrave it The Father Cuddy Memorial Library, because I am remembering you with great kindness and prayers, with the expectation that you will return and become a zealous Catholic, full of charity as well as faith..." The same week I met another fine collegian at a picnic, a man about 21. He has few religious roots, but was brought up in an atmosphere tainted with anti-Catholicism. We had a fine talk together. I promised him books, and received a moving letter of acknowledgement. "It certainly was my pleasure to talk to you, despite your 'antiquity.' It is

always a treat to speak to someone as motivated and as energetic as you are. I had never spoken to a priest before and was pleasantly surprised. "The literature you sent was very interesting. Living the Catholic Faith was very informative, but it did raise a few questions for me. The chapter entitled Your Attitude Towards Sex was bothersome, for the doctrine seemed to fall into what Dr. Samuel Johnson called 'Not living out of a love of God, but out of a fear of man.' If you could supply me literature which would describe what 'modest' means, and what the Catholic Church considers 'kosher' (what the purpose of marriage is; what is sexually

appropriate in marriage), I would be indebted to you. Acceptance was very good. It is similar to Rollo May's Man's Search for Himself... The Treasury of Prayers was the jewel in your package, and for that I am especially thankful..." (Anyone wanting Acceptance, or Treasury of Prayers — five for \$1; Me, Myself and You — \$1.95; two talks by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, on cassette — \$3.50; The Answers to the Seven Burdens of Life — loneliness, grief, sin, suffering, etc. — seven 15-minute talks by Abp. Sheen on the seven last words of Christ: \$24.95. Send order and check to me at Holy Trinity Church, 1460 Ridge Road, Webster, N.Y. 14580.

Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

Communion Makes Us One With Christ

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 6:51-58. (R1) Psv. 9:1-6. (R2) Eph. 5:15-20.

"Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns" so begins the first reading. God's wisdom is His Word. The Word became flesh to build the house of the Church. He



Fr. Shamon set her on the seven columns of the sacraments. The greatest of these seven sacraments is the Holy Eucharist — more vital to man's spiritual life than are food and drink to his bodily life. So wisdom calls, "Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed."

Jesus tells us why in the gospel: "If anyone eat this bread, he shall live forever." But more, He tells us what this bread is — "The bread I will give is my flesh."

At this, the Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?" Who quarreled? The Jews. In John's gospel, this word always meant the enemies of Jesus. With whom did they quarrel? With others among themselves. Some argued, "The man's mad. What absurdity! Are we to live forever by eating the flesh of a living man? Ridiculous!"

Others retorted, "He doesn't mean this literally. There has to be another meaning."

Although they argued among themselves, our Lord was nonetheless aware of what was going on. "Thereupon Jesus said to them, 'Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'" When our Lord was taken literally and did not mean to be, He explained himself. For instance, our Lord told the apostles that "our friend Lazarus sleeps. Let us go to him." The apostles said, "If he sleeps, he is getting better; why go?" The apostles took the word "sleeps" literally; actually, Jesus used it to indicate death. So He corrected the misun-

derstanding of the apostles and said plainly, "Our friend Lazarus is dead!"

In Sunday's gospel, the Jews took our Lord's words about eating literally. Had our Lord not wanted them to do this, He would have corrected them. Yet, in this instance, He not only does not correct them, He re-emphasizes what He had said. When our Lord wanted to be emphatic, He used the expression "Let me solemnly assure you." Then He went on to say, "If you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." As plain as all that!

And lest there still be a misunderstanding, our Lord switched words. In Greek there are two words for eating: phagein, meaning "to eat", and trogein, meaning "to crunch with one's teeth." So our Lord said, we must eat (phagein) His flesh; and to make certain that there was no mistaking what He meant, He used the stronger word for eating — trogein — translated "feed." "He who feeds on my flesh..." For John, what does all this mean? It means that He is teaching the reality of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

The one we feed on is not a dead Christ, but a Christ who died and now lives forever. His sacrifice began in time with His death on Calvary; but it was finished in eternity with His ascension to the right hand of the Father. And because it was, Christ's sacrifice is abreast to all times for eternity is timeless; and now man can feed on an eternal Christ!

The consequences of this eating, this communion with the eternal Christ are manifold.

First, such communion is the pledge of eternal life: "I will raise him up on the last day." Why? Because as food becomes one with the eater, so communion makes us one with Christ. "The man who feeds on my flesh... remains in me and I in him." What happened to Him therefore will happen to us. If I place a hundred-dollar bill in a magazine and then by accident burn the magazine, what happened to the magazine will happen to the hundred-dollar bill. So union with the risen Christ through communion is the pledge that the same thing that happened to Him will happen to us — a resurrection to eternal life.



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