

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Relationships Determine Our Wholeness

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 10:27-30. (R1) Acts 13:14, 43-52. (R2) Rv. 7:9, 14-17.

For centuries philosophers defined a person as a thinking being who is distinct from every other thinking being — a somebody who is unique, is himself and nobody else. His name is so proper to himself that to call him by name is to get personal.

Yet this definition is inadequate. Distinctness is only one side of the idea of what a person is. The other side is relatedness. A person is a unique being who can relate to another. In the Trinity, the three Persons are distinct, but they are persons precisely in that they relate to one another: the Father to the Son, and the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit. Relatedness, therefore, is an important facet of personality. As a consequence, relationships play a major part in building up or tearing down personality.

Jesus spoke of Himself and us in terms of relationships — like that of sheep to their shepherd.

Perhaps one of the finest examples in all literature of how relationships either debase or enrich personality was drawn by George Eliot in her classic novel "Silas Marner."

Silas's betrayal by his closest friend and his girl destroyed his faith in both man and God. He moved away from his traitorous friends to the village of Raveloe. A weaver by trade, Silas nursed his hurt by immersion in weaving. He wove like a spider, unremittingly, from pure impulse, without reflection, 16 hours a day. His withdrawal from people only caused them to mistrust him. To fill the vacuum in his heart, Silas took refuge in his weaving. It brought him gold. Gradually gold became his sole companion, his goal in life. Soon he went out only to deliver some cloth or buy some food. He was so withered and yellow that, even though he was not yet 40, children always called him "Old Master Marner."

Then all of a sudden his isolation ended, the linkage with people and return to normalcy began — and this through a relationship with

a little child. By a freak accident, Silas became the foster father of a little child whom he named Eppie. His love for Eppie and his endeavor to bring her up to her best advantage caused Silas to seek the help of others and eventually to transform his life.

One might say the theme of Eliot's novel is the contrasting effects of relationship. When Silas had centered his heart on gold, he became a gold-grubbing, antisocial, monstrous miser, dried up and withered away beyond his years. But when a child stole his heart, he reentered the human race.

In one masterful passage Eliot depicts the contrasting effects for good or evil of the two relationships — on Silas (and so on all persons).

Gold needed nothing but to be worshipped in close-locked solitude. The child was a creature of endless claims and ever-growing desires, seeking and loving sunshine and living sound and living movement; making trial of everything and stirring human kindness in all eyes that looked on her.

The gold kept his thoughts in an ever-repeated circle, leading to nothing beyond itself. But the child was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward and carried them far away to the future.

Gold enslaved; the child freed him. The gold had asked that he should sit weaving longer and longer, deafened and blinded more and more to all things except the monotony of his loom and the repetition of his web. But the child called him away from his weaving and made him think all its pauses a holiday, reawakening his senses with her fresh life — warming him into joy because she had joy.

As the child's mind grew into knowledge, his grew into memory. As her life unfolded, his trembled gradually into full consciousness. The novel ends with Silas a happy and a whole man.

Relationships! What are ours to things? To persons? To children? To Christ? Our holiness, wholeness, depends on our relationships to things and to persons, especially to the Good Shepherd.

Deaths

J.G. Cesarone

The Mass of Christian Burial for Joseph G. Cesarone was celebrated April 11, 1980, in St. Ambrose Church. Mr. Cesarone, formerly of St. Andrew's Parish, died April 8.

He was a Boy Scout leader, and most of his adult life had been spent in organizing and directing group activities for young people. His funeral Mass was offered by Father Bernard Dollen, pastor of St. Andrew's, and Father

'Family of Choice' Notions Draw Congressman's Fire

By William F. Willoughby
Religion Today

Washington — A broad new definition of the family, if adopted by the Carter Administration's White House Conference on the Family, would have the effect of destroying the family, Rep. John M. Ashbrook (R-Ohio) believes. He said there are moves to "define the American family out of existence."

Launching a particularly harsh attack in comments inserted into the Congressional Record, Ashbrook said the so-called Family of Choice movement would legitimize certain frowned-on relationships as families. They would be regarded by the government to be just as legal as those who are married or who are joined in blood relationships or through adoption are legally considered a family.

Thus, under Family of Choice, any two or more persons who choose to live together legally would constitute a family.

The impact of this, Ashbrook said, is that a "home consisting of parents and their born or adopted children would be the same as a homosexual couple or a commune, from a legal standpoint," if the Family of Choice ideas prevail.

He said that under the Family of Choice approach, "We would stop concerning ourselves with marriage, having or adopting children and kinship as special, basic,

vital foundations of our society. Anybody who said, "We are Family," would be family.

"I would like to serve notice that I, for one, will fight this diseased distortion of our most sacred institution until we are rid of it," Ashbrook said in remarks made for delivery before Congress.

"We must fight this mentality, and all the powers behind it, just as we fight any other disease, or any other enemy," he said.

Under this new definition, Ashbrook said, such groups as the Manson Family and the ill-fated group which was led by the late Rev. Jim Jones in California and Guyana could legally classify as "family."

He also looked askance at homosexuals who live together in various types of liaisons as being "family" in the legal sense.

"While I neither understand nor condone their actions, I do not propose to persecute or harass homosexuals who live together, but I believe that a society which gives a homosexual household the same legal standing as a true, traditional family is committing suicide," the Ohio legislator said.

He said the Family of Choice advocates want to accomplish their goals by "defining the nuclear family out of existence."

There are many other forces aiding in the work of

destroying the family, he said. "We are making it economically impossible for a large number of our young people to have and raise families decently by the crushing taxation, by breaking up of neighborhoods by busing, by anti-family bias in textbooks, by federal harassment of independent religious schools, by encouraging abortion..."

Added to the litany of ills recited by Ashbrook was high taxes, caused in part by taxing married couples more than those couples living together out of wedlock.

He said the large public deficit also is playing into the hands of those who would redefine the family because it allows such a high percentage of the American tax dollar to pay off interest on the public debt, leaving little or no money to build homes to accommodate the family unit.

He also cited what many feel is an increased hostility toward religion in public life — in effect, "driving religion out of our public life" — as being a detriment to a healthful climate for the family.

Referring back to the tenets of the Family of Choice movement, Ashbrook said it is necessary to be on guard against its encroachments during the White House Conference on the Family later this year.

"If President Carter's upcoming White House conference refuses to give official sanction to this warped definition (Ashbrook earlier called it a "fraud"), it will only be because of the efforts of grassroots pro-family activists, who, so far, have had to fight Mr. Carter's appointees every step of the way."

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Pope Announces French Trip

Vatican City (RNS) — Pope John Paul II will visit France, May 30 to June 2, the pontiff himself announced at his weekly general audience here April 9.

During his visit he will make an address at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on the occasion of a meeting of the agency's executive committee.

"This will be a rapid visit,

Adolescents Topic of Series

Dennis E. Boike, Ph.D., and Mary Hodgson, Ph.D., will conduct a four-evening series on "Today's Adolescent" at St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St., Pittsford, at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays, April 24, May 1, 8 and 15.

Dr. Boike will conduct the April 24 session on "Un-

during which I will have in my heart and in my spirit all of the aspiration of all the inhabitants of the dear and noble French nation, as well as the high ends pursued by UNESCO in the fields of education, science and culture," Pope John Paul said.

The pope's visit to France will be the fourth of announced papal trips abroad this year. In May he goes to Africa, in July to Brazil, and, at an as yet unspecified date, to the Philippines.

standing Today's Teenager," the May 1 session, "Discipline and the Teenager," and the May 8 session, "Teenage Depression, Helping the Adolescent Develop Self-esteem, and Related Topics."

Dr. Hodgson will lead the May 15 meeting on "Parent-Adolescent (Family) Communication."

Cost is \$18 a person and \$35 a couple. Further information is available by telephone from Dr. Boike or Dr. Hodgson at 385-1950.

Thomas Mull of the St. Ambrose staff.

Mr. Cesarone was an usher at St. Ambrose and an active member of the parish men's club. He held a number of scouting awards, including the St. George and the Beaver.

He leaves two sisters and a brother, Theresa, Elizabeth and Chester, and several nieces and nephews.

Holy Hour

Father Michael Huertel will be the leader for a Holy Hour scheduled at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, April 24, at Holy Trinity Church in Webster. The series of Holy Hours is sponsored by the Holy Trinity Chapter of the Peoples Eucharistic League.

Puzzle on Page 19

PUZZLE ANSWERS FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 1980

I. 1. John 2. sheep 3. hollow 4. fear 5. dome 6. moist 7. sky 8. maid 9. vice 10. yes 11. why 12. mute

Key Passages I. Jesus said, "My sheep do hear my voice; I know them; they follow me."

II. Paul and Barnabas travelled on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. On the sabbath day they entered the synagogue and sat down. Many Jews and devout Jewish converts followed Paul and Barnabas.

III. I, John, saw before me a huge crowd which no one could count from every nation and race, people and tongue. They stood before the throne and the Lamb, dressed in long white robes.