

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

### Water and the 'Living Water'

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 17:20-26. (R1) Acts 7:55-60. (R2) Rv. 22:12-14, 16-17, 20.

In Hyde Park a man was preaching on Christ and Christianity. A dirty-faced heckler shouted, "We've had Christianity for nearly 2,000 years, and what difference has it made? What's it ever done? We're in just as big a mess now as we've ever been."

"My good man," the preacher replied, "don't you know we've had water for much longer than that, but you've still got a dirty face. You've got to use something before it works."

Sunday's second reading is about water and about using it. Water is presented as a cleansing agent: "Happy are they who wash their robes;" and again as a nutrient: "let him who is thirsting come forward."

Then the invitation is extended to use the water.

"The Spirit and the Bride," that is, the Holy Spirit through His Bride, the Church, says to the thirsty of the world, "Come! Come into the Church and find Christ, the spiritual Rock, from whom come the waters of the Holy Spirit, waters that cleanse, waters that refresh."

During the Feast of Tabernacles about Oct. 15, a pitcher of water was drawn each day of the feast from the pool of Siloam. In solemn procession it was carried to the temple altar and offered as a libation to God. The pouring out of the water recalled the rock in the desert from which God brought forth water for Israel. It symbolized the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Messiah.

One day when Jesus watched the procession and saw the Levite priest pouring out the libation of water. He called out in a loud voice: "If anyone thirst, let him come to me . . . and from within Him rivers of living water shall flow." Here He was referring to the Spirit (Jn. 7:37-8).

One of the most basic physical needs of mankind is water. Only oxygen is equal to it in maintaining life.

Our basic spiritual need is what Jesus called "living water" — the Holy Spirit. It is as if Jesus had said: "Come to me, accept me, trust me, and I will put into you through my Spirit a new life which will give you purity and satisfaction, and which will take away your

frustrations and unsatisfied hungers, and give you the kind of life you have always longed for and never had."

Water must be preceded by thirst. The Holy Spirit has always existed, but to work for us and in us, we must thirst for Him, desire Him. For centuries atomic power was in the world. People did not invent atomic power; it has always been here. Yet only in our time have we tapped and used what has always been there. The Holy Spirit has always existed, but His full power has not been enjoyed by many, because the many have never responded to His invitation to come and "accept the life-giving water."

### Lilac Sunday Planned

An interfaith worship service has been scheduled at 11:30 a.m., Sunday, May 18, at the Highland Bowl as part of the 1980 Lilac Festival.

Sister Mary Wintish, diocesan director of Urban Ministry, will participate along with the Rev. Lawrence Witmer, executive director of the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries.

The Bishop Kearney and Aquinas bands will take part in the downtown parade the day preceding Lilac Sunday.

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