

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Faith Can Destroy Our Fences

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 14:13-21. (R1) Is. 55:1-3. (R2) Rom. 8:35, 37-39.

Perhaps one of Robert Frost's most oft-quoted poems is "Mending Wall." The poem rests on a contradiction. Its two famous lines oppose each other. The poem maintains: "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." But it also insists: "Good fences make good neighbors."

The contradiction is logical for the opposing statements are uttered by two different types of people — both are right. Man cannot live without walls, boundaries, limits, especially self-limitations, yet he resents all bonds and is happy at the downfall of any barrier.

The invention of barbed wire is hardly a watershed event; most of us probably assume it has been around since the time of Abraham. The fact is, it was not invented until 1873. At that time Henry M. Rose showed it for the first time at the De Kalb, Illinois, county fair. Subsequent improvements made it efficient enough to "conquer" the West.

We've never stopped our fencing mania in the West or elsewhere. We seem to want to separate ourselves from each other. One of the first things a new homeowner will do, if the tract developer hasn't already done it, is to put up a fence or a wall around the property.

And yet, separation from others can be hell on earth. Papillon, who escaped from the notorious penal settlement off the coast of French Guiana, "the Devil's Island," told what it was that was most intolerable. It wasn't the hard labor, nor

the climate, nor the fear and physical degradation, not even the brutality of human beings — but "the separation from the rest of the world; the vast loneliness of the jungle and the sea, which shuts the prisoner off from the world into himself and drives him crazy."

To give sanity and balance to the people of God, St. Paul tells us two wonderful things about the relationship of God to us. The first thing is that God will never put up fences to block us off from His love. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul asks. "Trials, or distress, or persecution . . . ?" And the second is the absolute certitude that this is so. "I am certain that neither death nor life . . . will be able to separate us from the love of God." (R2)

How true to Paul's character to be so strongly assertive. No equivocation, no hesitation, no wavering belief. Still, no cock-sureness either. Paul, the man of faith, was certain, because he was full of faith. "I am certain!"

Emily Dickinson wrote two beautiful quatrains on the certainty of faith.

I never saw a moor, I never saw the sea; Yet know I how the heather looks, And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God, Nor visited in heaven; Yet certain am I of the spot As if a chart were given.

We tend to build spiritual and psychological walls and fences. But faith will tear them down. "I am certain — nothing — nothing, — will be able to separate us from the love of God. I am certain!" Faith gives us the certitude of God's inseparability from us. Let us not then build fences and walls between our God and ourselves.

Local RSMs in Dublin For Worldwide Meeting

Three Rochester Sisters of Mercy are among the 100 members of the international congregation attending the order's first worldwide meeting in Dublin, Ireland.

The group was founded in Dublin 150 years ago.

The Rochester Sisters are Sister Mary Florence Sullivan, elected delegate of the diocesan congregation; Sister Janet Wahl, delegate of the

diocesan group serving in Santiago, Chile; and Sister Michael Lappetito, executive director of the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

The conference is called Trocaire, Gaelic for "Mercy," and has drawn delegates from Ireland, England, New Zealand, Australia, New Guinea and other islands in the Pacific; South and East Africa, and the Americas.

Workshop Sets Classes

Classes in Juggling and Circus Skills are being offered from 7:30 to 9 p.m. each Monday evening starting Aug. 10 and running through Sept. 21; sponsored by the Mime Workshop. The fee for the seven-week series is \$50, and classes are suitable for all ages.

Another offering of the Mime Workshop is Children's Creative Dramatics classes from 10 to 11:30 a.m. each Saturday starting Aug. 8. The fee for this class is \$35 for the

For information and registration, contact the Mime Workshop, 1255 University Ave., Rochester 14607, or call 461-4700.

CLOTHING NEEDED

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