

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

A Riddle Can Teach

(Father Shamon is out of the country for a few weeks, leaving behind the following previously published commentary on the readings for next Sunday.)

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 6/1-15. (R1) 2 Kgs. 4/42-44. (R2) Eph. 4-1-6.

I am sure everyone knows what a conundrum is. In a broad sense, it is a riddle. Here is a conundrum: "What is it that everyone has and nobody wants and yet when he loses it, he is sorry?" The purpose of such questions is to make a person think hard; the more one thinks, the more interested one becomes; and the more interested he grows, the more likely he is to understand and remember the answer when it comes. Generally, the one who asks the question knows the answer. But he asks it to sear the answer in another person's mind.

It was a conundrum that Jesus used when He asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" They were in a deserted place and so there was absolutely nowhere to buy bread. Moreover, the apostles did not have near enough money — "two hundred days' wages" would not have sufficed to give each a mouthful. Surely a puzzling question!

Jesus put the question to Philip, because Philip needed teaching. At the beginning of His ministry, we read, "Jesus found Philip, and said to him, 'Follow me!' Then Philip went away and found Nathaniel and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah.'" What a switch that was! He tells Nathaniel that he, Philip, had found Messiah. Actually it was Jesus who had found Philip. But that was the trouble with Philip (and so often with all of us): we see ourselves, in relation to God, as always taking the initiative. The truth is, it is God who always takes the first step toward us.

Typically, in this instance, Philip still thought things must begin from man's side.

French Honors Area Graduates

The R.T. French Co. has given \$50 United States Savings Bonds and engraved pens or pins to four diocesan high school graduates for outstanding achievements. The honorees and their schools are Alicia M. Alesso, Our Lady of Mercy High School; Peter Krenzer, Bishop Kearney High School; Susan Marchand, St. Agnes High School; and Margaret Sousa, Cardinal Mooney High School.

The recipients of the annual award are selected by school faculty on the basis of interest and ability in home economics, overall scholastic ability and traits of character and citizenship.

So when Jesus put the bread question to him, Philip immediately began calculating. He began counting heads. He began estimating costs — "two hundred days' wages" would not be enough. And because he looked only to man's side, Philip was baffled; he saw no answer to the conundrum.

Strange isn't it? Jesus had said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread?" Jesus used the word "we," not "you" — He wanted Himself included in the solution of the problem. But Philip did not take Jesus into account. He still had not learned that without Jesus, there was practically nothing he could not do. As a result, the arithmetic of Philip just did not add up, whereas he was to see that the arithmetic of Jesus left a surplus.

Perhaps probabilities that can be tabulated are not altogether the best foundations upon which to rest our calculations. The audacity of faith that expects great things, though there is nothing visible upon which to build, is wiser and more prudent than the creeping common sense that adheres to facts and figures and forgets the one fact that God is with us!

Only when we are aware that our own resources are inadequate — "what are these among so many?" — will His great power pour into us. We must first be emptied of self before we can be filled with God.

How foolish, too, the wisdom of the wise! Jesus' solution to the food problem was so simple that Philip could not see it: Jesus, an ordinary lad, and what was at hand (five barley loaves and two fish). In the hands of Jesus, nobody is unimportant, nor is any offering, however small, too insignificant. The fact of life is that Jesus alone suffices; but, for our sakes, He needs what we can bring to Him. We may not have much to bring, but He needs what we have. Undoubtedly, the world has missed many miracles just because people would not bring to Christ what they have and what they are!

Oh, by the way, the answer to the conundrum in the opening paragraph is — your temper!



Check Presented

Nazareth Academy Parents' Club President Chuck Swartz, left, hands Principal Sister Elaine Englert a check for \$5,500 as Joe Fitzgibbons, club vice president, looks on. The check was presented at a recent dinner honoring parents and volunteers and represents the proceeds of the annual Garage Sale, the Craft Show and the Fashion Show.



Alumnae Effort

Carol Rose Ebert Begy, left, chairperson of the Mercy High School Alumnae Association's third annual fund drive, presents a check for more than \$10,800 to Sister Mary Bonaventure, principal. More than 600 alumnae from across the country contributed to the drive. Following a theme of "a dollar a year," alumnae were asked to contribute one dollar for each year they had been away from their alma mater.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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Achiever Honored

John Lawrence Fama, son of Dr. and Mrs. John L. Fama of Pittsford has been named President of the Year by the area Junior Achievement program.

With the distinction, Fama also won a college scholarship from Eastman Kodak Co. and a trip to the Junior Achievement conference in Bloomington, Ind.

A June graduate from McQuaid Jesuit High School, Fama will attend Marquette University this Fall.



FAMA

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A TOUR THROUGH THE ORIENT October 16 to November 2 VISITING JAPAN Nikko, Kamakura, Hakone, and Kyoto REPUBLIC OF CHINA Beijing (Peking), the Great Wall, and Shanghai HONG KONG Hosted By FATHER CUDDY For details, call or write: WYDLER TRAVEL SERVICE, Inc. 1778 Empire Boulevard, Webster, NY 14580 (716) 671-2840

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