

## A Word for Sunday

with Father Albert Shamon



**Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 20:29-23; (R1) Acts 2:1-11; (R2) 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13.**

The Jewish Feast of Pentecost was celebrated for two reasons: 1.) to commemorate the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, and 2.) to give thanks for the spring harvest.

Pentecost means "the fiftieth." Another name for it was "The Feast of Weeks." It was called this because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day, a week of weeks (seven times seven) after the Passover.

The Passover generally fell in the middle of April. Pentecost fell around the beginning of June. Since traveling conditions were better then, the Feast of Pentecost usually attracted more people than the Passover Feast. This accounts for the international character of the nations listed by St. Luke. "Parthians and Medes, Elamites, etc." (Acts 2:9-10.)

Also, servile work was forbidden on this day, so there was a distinct holiday flavor about the feast which brought greater crowds than usual to the streets.

It was on this feast of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit came down upon the Church. When this occurred, four things happened. First, there came a noise like a strong, driving wind. Secondly, tongues of fire appeared which parted and came to rest on each of the disciples in the upper room. Thirdly, all were filled with the Holy Spirit. And lastly, they began to express themselves in "foreign tongues" and to make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them (Acts 2:2-40).

What did all this mean? It meant God was present in the Church and in every member of the Church then in the upper room. And the happenings showed why He had become present.

Thus the fire and the wind showed the presence of the Spirit of God in the

Church. The speaking in tongues showed that He was present in each one of them, that He filled them.

The "noise like a strong, driving wind" signified the power and the energy that were now available to the Church to carry out her mission.

The "tongues of fire" signified the power given to the apostles and their successors to proclaim the good news with such fiery zeal as to set hearts afire and renew the face of the earth.

As regards the speaking in "foreign tongues" that St. Luke wrote the apostles did, it was very likely "prayer tongues." The apostles had no need for the gift of speaking in all kinds of different languages because everyone talked Aramaic or Greek. The discovery that Jesus is God, which the Holy Spirit gave them, so filled them with joy and love of God that they became tongue-tied, beside themselves, unable to praise God enough. So the Spirit took their tongues and enabled them to praise God in words beyond the power of speech. Such "prayer tongues" are inintelligible, so it was easy for St. Luke to call them "foreign tongues" and for some to think the apostles drunk.

Perhaps St. Luke knew the difference between "prayer tongues" and "foreign tongues" but purposely chose the expression "foreign tongues" in order to indicate the worldwide mission of the Church, which is to preach the gospel to all men of every nation and tongue — a theme dear to the heart of St. Luke.

Confirmation is our Pentecost. And yet, how many of us have been confirmed and nothing has happened? Why? Because we have not tapped this great spiritual power within us. Every electrical outlet has power, but it is not given unless we plug into it. Have we plugged into the power of the Spirit by daily devotion to Him?

## On the Right Side

with Father Paul J. Cuddy



### The Video Apostolate

We are three priests who live at Holy Trinity, Webster: Fathers Hart and Schrammel and myself. Recently we each received a well-packaged set of three video cassettes from the Unification Church, commonly known as the Moonies. Video cassettes are like moving pictures shown on the television. They require a special machine, Beta or VHS, two different sizes. Video stores advertise movies — good, indifferent and sick. But more and more, video cassettes are being used as an educational tool by industry, education and religion.

The three video cassettes sent by the Moonies are technically well-done, explaining the Moonie cult. I checked with many priests, and most of them have received similar packages. The Moonie leaders are loaded with wealth, and they invest it astutely. Father McNamara of Corning sent me a clipping from the New York Times announcing that the Washington Times has appointed the prestigious Arnaud de Borchgrave as its new editor. I thought it strange that de Borchgrave should accept the editorship of a Moonie-owned daily until I remembered that the Moonies are as anticommunist as Pope John Paul II. De Borchgrave's novels, "The Spike" and "Monimbo," both on international terrorism and drug trafficking related to the KGB, have been best-sellers, and de Borchgrave for many years was editor in chief for Newsweek.

A couple of years ago, I read the hair-curling account by a young Rochesterian, Steve Kemperman, of his being sucked into the Moonie vortex, his life dedicated to the Moonie case, and his final leaving and restoration to normalcy. I wrote a review of his book, "The Lord of the Second Advent," for this column, and was surprised to learn afterward how many families have been hurt by their children being caught into sundry cults: the Moonies, the Way, etc.

The Moonie tapes did not fit the Beta machines of Fathers Hart and Schrammel, so they gave theirs to me. The thought came: "Maybe the Kempermans might like a set." I had mislaid their address but remembered that Steve was graduated from McQuaid Jesuit High School. Father Richard Noonan is alumni association director. He has an urbane, sympathetic Christian graciousness that makes him admired by the clergy and loved by the laity. I phoned him for the

address, explaining I wanted to send the Moonie tapes to the Kemperman family. I added: "The diocesan priests have been deluged with the Moonie tapes," and asked: "Did they send a set to the Jesuits at McQuaid?"

"No, they didn't." And Father Joe Travato of St. John Fisher said the same of the Basilians. It may be that the Moonies consider the religious hopeless for conversion, while we diocesan priests may be more likely game. "Would you like a set?" I asked.

"Why, yes," he responded. "Well, the reason I should like you to have them is that maybe some in your community might learn some techniques," I told him. The Jesuits do have Father Powell on video tapes. They are very good, and are used in many retreat houses, Marriage Encounters, and some on cable TV. Notre Dame, Canandaigua, has used them, and retreat participants responded favorably. Considering the special talents of so many Jesuits, that could become a specialized apostolate.

Keep the Faith, P.O. Box 8261, North Haledon, N.J. 07508, was begun on a small scale by a Mr. William Walsh to propagate edifying and instructive religious audio tapes. It has tremendously expanded in the audio tapes, and now has extended into video — lives of saints, instructions, etc. Father Sebastian Falcone at St. Bernard's Institute is developing an impressive library of Archbishop Sheen talks on video, which will thrill many people who remember the master preacher. These are available for purchase through Friends of Fulton Sheen Archives, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester 14620.

Our Lord commented: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." While paying the parish fuel bill, the teachers and employees, the diocesan taxes, the parish repairs; agonizing about raising money through ordinary collections, extraordinary collections, fairs, etc. — all these are necessary things — maybe we can learn from the children of the world. We do have the commission: "Go and make disciple of all nations ... Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you." It pleases me that I have sold more than 45,000 Sheen audio cassettes. It would please me more to see the video-cassette apostolate take fire in Catholic circles.

## More Opinions

### Welcome and a Puzzle for Fr. Cuddy

The following is a letter to Courier-Journal columnist Father Paul J. Cuddy.

Dear Father Cuddy:

Welcome back to the right side of the "new" Courier-Journal! I read with some interest your article on the RCIA and the fact that close to 500 new members were received into the Catholic community at Easter.

When I read your outburst at your benefactor at Tom's Diner, I could not help but think of how you were caught. On the one hand, you mentioned that 499 had chosen to enter our community of faith and on the other hand this young man, paying for your lunch, had left our community and chosen another community of faith.

Then I remembered reading an article in which Robert Bellah, a noted sociologist, was being interviewed about American society. Bellah was troubled about a number of things in life in our country today. Two of them were: a hankering for the past which finds the present time lacking; and, a widespread privatism. (Bellah characterizes this as: "Get to the wells before anyone else gets there, and then protect them.")

I then wondered, Father Paul, if part of the reason for your young man's choosing the Assembly of God, which is generally a

more fundamentalist and personal centered religion, was that the Vatican II Church challenged him too much. Perhaps the emphasis on the social responsibility of our faith and the communal aspect of life in Christ had been too much for him.

I believe many have left the Church because they look for the qualities that Bellah speaks about — qualities that I feel the Gospel calls us away from. The Church of today maybe has done its job well and because people can be afflicted in their comfortableness, they choose another way.

We need to trust that people will not leave a faith community or join a faith community for light reasons. The challenge for you and me is to stir up the lives of our people so much that they are on fire with the faith in and love for our God. And thus they will draw others to come and see where the Lord lives.

My thoughts for today, Father Paul. Again, welcome back — I am sure many are very happy that the Courier-Journal brings out of its storehouse one of the old dependables.

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### Priests Must Promote Efforts for Unborn

To the Editor:

I am so upset at most of the Catholic priests because they almost never speak out against abortion. They don't tell the Catholic people often enough that God does not condone slaughtering his unborn children. There are many Catholics who are for abortion, and that shouldn't be. What do these pro-abortion Catholics think God is saying: "Oh go ahead and mutilate my unborn children, I don't mind!"? Sure God just loves to see his innocent children be mutilated for the convenience and profit of man.

The priests seem to concentrate on nuclear war and sending money over to the communist countries to feed the starving people. They know that most of the money being sent over to these communist countries is not

being given to those poor, starving people. How come the priests don't take up collections for the pro-life groups to help protect the thousands of babies being slaughtered every day through abortion? How come most of our priests do not tell the people to get involved in protecting the unborn like they tell us to get involved with helping world hunger and the no-nukes movement.

I think it is time our priests start communicating to the people that abortion is morally wrong and that something has to be done to stop it. If Jesus were alive today he wouldn't stand for the brutal slaughtering of his unborn children, he would do something about it.

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## Variety of 'Scandals' Can Cause People To Turn Away from Church

To the Editor:

I share Father Cuddy's concern over people who have left the Church, but see other causes.

To begin with, those who have a relationship with a personal God are less likely to turn away in the face of someone's scandalous behavior than those whose faith is limited to adherence to a set of rules or beliefs.

Furthermore, not one of us escapes failure to witness Christ's redeeming love, at one time or another. So that Father Cuddy might reflect on some other situations that have caused scandal, I would like to share some memories.

I remember the priest who refused communion to a young boy at daily Mass because the youngster had been talking. I had been impressed that the boy should be at a daily Mass; I wonder if he ever came again.

I remember a conversation with my brother, whose life exemplifies the 25th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. When I expressed concern that he no longer went to church, he replied angrily, "The trouble with me is that I believe what they taught me, but they don't live it!"

I remember taking our handicapped son to an educational placement out of state. We arrived just before lunch and had only a few minutes before we were to report to the group home where he was to live. Concerned that he have a good experience in the new

parish (he dislikes going to church), we wanted to introduce him to his new pastor, yet were uneasy about the hour. The incredibly rude and screaming reception, despite our explanations and apologies, made us sorry we had risked it.

I remember writing to a subsequent pastor, asking whether the parish had anything like a human development committee whose members could, on occasion, bring this same son to Mass, as he was not allowed to walk alone, and the house parents were not getting him to church. Six months went by without a response, so on a weekend visit, I introduced myself to the pastor and gently repeated my question. "Those boys can get here on their own!" he said, and turned away.

Perhaps the young man that Father Cuddy met in the restaurant had had a similar experience in his past, and possibly Father's confrontation only served to convince him that he had been right to leave the church. How sad this would be!

What we really need, I believe, is to understand that we are each called to cry the Gospel with our lives, to treat each person we meet as we would Jesus. When we realize our own shortcomings in this effort, perhaps we will be less scandalized by those of others and less likely to reject the whole Church because of the human frailty of its members.

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