

A Word for Sunday

With Father Albert Shamon



Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 6:24-35; (R1) Exodus 16:2-4; (R2) Ephesians 4:17, 20-24.

When Vatican II called for a reform of the Mass, one of the areas to be revised was the Sunday readings. The council in its constitution on the sacred liturgy decreed: "The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's word" (#51).

To fulfill this will, the Sunday readings were increased from two to three: one from the Old Testament generally, one from the epistles, and one from the gospels. And a three-year cycle was also introduced in lieu of a one-year cycle. A three-year cycle allows the use of one Gospel per year: Matthew is read in year one (Cycle A), Mark in year two (Cycle B), and Luke in year three (Cycle C). St. John's Gospel is read every year from mid-Lent to Pentecost.

How do we know which cycle we are in? The formula is simple: the year number divisible by three is year three or Cycle C, the Lucan Year. For instance, 1986 is divisible by three, so 1986 is Cycle C or the Lucan Year. 1985 is the Marcan. 1984 is the Matthean. 1983, the Lucan, again divisible by three, and so on.

Why this rehash of the new Lectionary? Because we are in cycle B or the Marcan year, yet the Sunday gospels near the end of July and all of August are taken from St. John's sixth chapter on the bread of life. The reason for this is that the Marcan Gospel is the shortest of the Synoptics — only 16 chapters long — and so, from the 17th to the 21st Sundays of the year, Mark's Gospel is supplemented by John's sixth chapter corresponding to the loaves section in Mark.

Next Sunday's gospel, for instance, is from John on the bread of life. Our Lord's words were an interpretation of the miracle worked on the preceding day

by which He had fed nearly 15,000 people with five loaves and a couple of fish.

Our Lord's miracles were parables in action. Besides their immediate purpose of grace and love, they contained divine messages of spiritual truth. The manna, bread from heaven, revealed "I, the Lord, am your God." The bread multiplied revealed that "I, Jesus, am the bread of life."

Man has two hungers: physical and spiritual. His physical hunger can be satisfied by bread alone, but not his spiritual hunger. If physical hunger is not satisfied, one eventually starves and dies. If spiritual hunger is not satisfied, one becomes despondent, possibly suicidal, and dies. In the first of the great "I am's" of John's Gospel, Jesus says, "I am the bread of life." I am the One who alone can slake the hunger and the thirst of the human heart.

Hunger is a global experience — painful, functional, but when frustrated, also brutalizing. This basic experience says loud and clear: we need others, we are creatures. It says all is gift — life, existence, sustenance. Therefore food, as well as birth and death, have been occasions of communal prayer.

We pray at table; we pray at the table of the Lord. Both breads are needed. Yet when referring to the miracle of the loaves, our Lord did not preach on labor, wages, industrial conditions, but on the need of spiritual life. The people Jesus was talking to were economically well-off. They were not the sick, the leprosy, the diseased, but people who could take time off and walk long miles to hear Him. It was as if Jesus had said, not only do the moral outcasts, the sick, the leprosy and the poor need Him, but especially the purest, noblest, best-fed of the people. Faith is not a luxury, it is a necessity just like bread. Without faith, one cannot eat the bread of life. Without the bread of life, there is no life, here or hereafter.

On the Right Side

With Father Paul J. Cuddy



Thursday at 11 a.m., I was praying in your Trumansburg church when the first, second and third grades of your religious summer school tramped in. Each child made a correct genuflection. Sister George, IHM, settled them down and explained the tabernacle, Jesus' presence within, the candles and sundry ecclesial things. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters are well-known for their fidelity to the Pope. So Sister George asked: "Now, does anyone know the name of Our Holy Father?" Little John Chiment proclaimed: "Father Cuddy." Sister was taken aback, and quickly explained: "The Holy Father is Pope John Paul, and he lives in Rome." John seemed unconvinced since I was the visible, present Father saying his prayers. I was so tickled that I gave him a big balloon I happened to have in my left pocket. He was the envy of the whole class. Remember that window on the Ithaca side of the church? It has a picture of a garlanded Immaculate Heart of Mary. Well, little George Hade was intrigued and asked: "Sister, why is there a picture of a strawberry in the church window?" I looked at it, and do you know, it does look like a strawberry garnished with flowers. And we were in the strawberry season.

In the late 30s, many parishes had religious vacation schools, conducted by our Sisters of Mercy and St. Joseph, assisted by zealous lay people. Later, they were discontinued; I don't know why, perhaps because of World War II. Anyway, that has been a great loss. I am glad that you have continued the school. I think Father Ryan started that 10 years ago with the help of the Philadelphia sisters.

Sister James remarked that the two-week vacation school gives 30 hours of instruction, devotion, crafts and games. This is the exact length of time of a whole year of our CCD program: 30 hours in 30 weeks, sandwiched in among class studies, athletics, plays, etc. This is not to fault the CCD program or its teachers, but does it not make sense to have a relaxed but concentrated 30 hours of teaching and practice? A few years ago, Rose Forjone Leisinging of Sodus, whom

I knew as a youngster in Clyde years ago, phoned: "Do you know any sisters who would conduct a summer vacation school for Sodus? Father Kavanagh said he would promote it if I could find teachers. I learned more at our summer school in Clyde when I was a child than I ever learned in the regular CCD classes." I mentioned the possibility to Father's Dollen and Meng, suggesting we visit the Notre Dame Sisters in Chardon, Ohio, where my friend Sister Carl intimated that some of their sisters would be available if notified ahead of time. Unfortunately, we did not follow through.

However, I am glad to hear that this year several parishes have had religious vacation schools, some run by lay people, some by diocesan sisters. I was at St. Mark's, Greece, filling in for Father Erdle July 15 to 19. They had a fine program run by parishioners, assisted by young boys and girls as part of their confirmation commitment.

Some Catholic parishes join with sundry Christian churches for an ecumenical Bible school. My problem with such a program is that the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist, on the Church and on Our Lady is necessarily omitted. That is a serious deficiency. It would seem that a school of religion should stress rather than omit the Eucharistic Presence at Mass, Communion and in the tabernacle; that there should be a proper place for Our Blessed Mother; that there should be an emphasis on the uniqueness of the Catholic Church. Many who refer ambiguously to the documents of Vatican II omit what should be emphasized: that the Catholic Church is one, holy, apostolic — and unique. Our children — and adults — should appreciate that our Catholic faith is a unique gift of God. In the dairy world, we have homogenized whole milk with all the cream mixed with the skim milk; 2 percent which has much of the cream removed; and 1 percent which has most of the cream removed and is like watered milk. It would seem that a religious program without the Eucharist, the Mass, the Real Presence, Our Lady and the Church is like the 2 percent or the 1 percent, according to the program.

Obituaries

Philip Palmesano, Hornell Barber, Dies at 49

Philip J. Palmesano, 49, of Hornell died Monday, July 15, at St. James Mercy Hospital. Trained at the Schenectady Barber School, he owned and operated Phil's Barber Shop for 27 years. A lifelong Hornell resident, he served with the U.S. Army in Okinawa and in the Korean conflict, and was an active member of the Army Reserve in Wayland. A member of St. Ann's Church, he was active in the diocesan charismatic and



Cursillo movements. Palmesano was also an 11-year member of the Hornell Chapter of the Full Gospel Businessman's Fellowship, having served as president for the past four years.

Survivors include: his wife of 23 years, Joanne Harkenrider Palmesano; one son, Philip A., at home; three daughters, Teresa of Tupper Lake, and Christin and Dina, both at home; two brothers, Frank of Hornell and Joseph of Fairport; five sisters, Caroline Giglio, Phyllis Burdick and Madeline Sciotti of Hornell, Tillie O'Connor of Dansville, and Rosemary DeLarenta of Newark, N.J.; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to a trust fund established for the Palmesano children in care of Phyllis Burdick, 29 Fulton St., Hornell, N.Y., 14843.

A. Helen Connell, Longtime Schoolteacher

A. Helen Connell, a former English teacher at Rochester's Monroe High School, died Wednesday, July 3, 1985, at St. Ann's Home after a long illness. She would have been 85 on August 11.

Miss O'Connell taught the honors English classes at Monroe for more than 40 years, prior to her retirement in 1965. She was a charter member of the Rochester Chapter of the College of New Rochelle. She was also

active in the Catholic Women's Club, the American Association of University Women, and the organizations of Holy Redeemer and St. Thomas More parishes.

She is survived by her sister, Sister Helen O'Connell of the Visitation Nuns of Georgia; several nieces; one nephew; and many friends.

A memorial Mass was said in the chapel of St. Ann's Home Wednesday, July 24, 1985.

Cenacle Retreats

Father Euclid Marier will lead the Legion of Mary in retreat at the Cenacle from Friday, Sept. 13 at 7:30 p.m. to Sunday, Sept. 15 at 3:30 p.m. Time for private and shared prayer, sharing and personal consultation with Father Marier or one of the Cenacle sisters and celebration of Eucharist will be included.

Space permitting, the retreat will be open to others. Please contact Bernadine Begley, 1418 Latta Rd., Rochester, N.Y., 14612, (716)663-8722.

In September the Cenacle will welcome the return of Father John Walchurs, S.J., popular author and world traveler, for three events.

He will lead a retreat for men from Friday, Sept. 20, at 7:30 p.m. to Sunday, Sept. 22 at 3:30 p.m. An Evening of Renewal is scheduled on Monday, Sept. 23 from 7:30-9:30 p.m. followed by a Day of Renewal on Tuesday, Sept. 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Included will be presentations, discussion, refreshments and, on Tuesday, celebration of the Eucharist.

The retreat offering is \$55. For more information, contact the Cenacle Ministry Office, 693 East Avenue, Rochester, N.Y., 14607, (716)271-8755.

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