

A Word for Sunday

With Father Albert Shamon



Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 7:1-8; (R1) Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8; (R2) James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27.

"The Pharisees and some of the experts in the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus." They came not to hear, but to judge Jesus. How often the religious and the experts are the enemies of Christ! Haughtily and with hostility they asked, "Why do your disciples not follow the traditions of our ancestors?"

There are two kinds of traditions: 1) man-made traditions, like the Jewish "Fiddler on the Roof;" and 2) divinely inspired tradition handed down by apostolic preaching and the scriptures. Of the first, Paul said, "Hold fast to the traditions you received from us, either by our word or by letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). This tradition "hands on in its full purity God's word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit ... Consequently, it is not from sacred scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything that has been revealed" (Constitution on Divine Revelation, #8-9). The fathers of Vatican Council II condemned the fundamentalist error that scripture alone (scriptura sola) is the only source of divine revelation.

Christ then lashed out at His judges — "You hypocrites!"

Hypocrisy is the tribute vice pays to virtue — lip service, like that of Uriah Heep, for ulterior gain. Our Lord branded hypocrites "whitened sepulchers" — outwardly beautiful to men, but inwardly full of dead men's bones. The opposite of hypocrisy is sincerity — being of one consistency within and without. Hypocrites observe external traditions precisely because no change of heart is required. It is much easier to do than to be.

Finally, Jesus turned to the crowds and laid down this general principle: **What one does outwardly does not necessarily change one inwardly; yet what is in the heart determines one's moral state and**

character. Dirty hands and dirty face do not make a morally dirty; nor do clean hands and a clean face make one morally clean. It is what is in the heart that counts.

Did you ever visit a limestone cave? You will notice stalactites — large, massive pillars that adorn and support the cave. These pillars were formed by nature's own slow, mysterious process. A little drop of water percolates through the roof of the cave and deposits its sediment. Another falls in, till an icicle of stone is formed. The icicle grows till it reaches the floor of the cave and becomes a solid pillar which can be broken only by the most powerful forces.

So in the cave of the human heart, a process just as silent and effective, but more momentous, is going on. In the cave of the heart, hidden from all eyes, each thought, each feeling, like a little drop of water, sinks into the soul and deposit — what is almost imperceptible — its sediment. Then another and another follows, till they erect pillars of habits that only the strongest forces can ever dislodge. If the thoughts and feelings and desires unsuspectingly entertained, are lustful, then the heart is changed into an impregnable fortress of sin.

This is the terrible tragedy going on today in the media. So many, unconsciously, are letting slip into their hearts lustful thoughts, fancies and desires by the programs they watch, the movies they see, the music with lustful lyrics they hear, without the slightest realization of what is really going on within themselves. This is so, because this consumption seems so insignificant — day by day, drop by drop. No notice is given. No alarm is sounded. We suppose somehow they will be absorbed into oblivion and leave no trace behind. Yet all the while the pillars of character are being formed.

This is what our Lord meant when He said in effect, "Look to your heart! Your thoughts, your fancies, your desires shape your eternal destiny — not what you eat or drink."

Three Nazareth Academy seniors have been named by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation as having "outstanding academic potential." They are: Deborah J. Carmen, Nancy A. Ciavari and Lisa M. Zabelny.

The students were chosen as a result of their performance on the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test. They have been identified as among the top 5 percent of all high school juniors who took the test and are eligible to compete for \$20 million in scholarships.

On the Right Side

With Father Paul J. Cuddy



Q. Is it true that you are anti-Jesuit?

A. That supposition has come from certain excitabilities of McQuaid's Father O'Malley and because I distributed 75 copies of "The Pope and the Jesuits" by Professor James Hitchcock, which exposes widespread disloyalties against the pope by upper-eschelon Jesuits.

Q. Why don't you speak of faithful Jesuits?

A. Oh, come. Why don't you heed what I have expressed many times in this column? To illustrate: "The Homiletic and Pastoral Review" is a monthly theological magazine, read mostly by priests — 30,000, I think — and published by Jesuit Father Kenneth Baker. I have recommended it many times in this column. Nearly a year ago, a friend of mine who is knowledgeable about the faith, practices it faithfully and has a wonderful family, had become so agitated by the infidelities within the Church that his wife said to me: "My poor husband, he is at the end of the rope." I gave her two copies of the "Homiletic" and said: "Here. Have him read these. They may give him courage." Some weeks later I met her. She beamed: "You know, those magazines have made a changed man of my husband. He didn't know that there were so many priests and bishops who are loyal to the Church." So I subscribed to the "Homiletic" for him and also for our deacons Leo Kester, Joe Fox, Stan Zawacki and Gregory Doyle.

Q. Have you any Jesuit friends?

A. Hardly any, but there are many I admire. One is Father Leo Welch, S.J., who is from our Holy Trinity parish and has spent most of his 50 years as a Jesuit priest in the Philippines. He sends an occasional round-robin letter to friends and supporters which is worthy of the famous "Jesuit Relation." Recently he wrote:

"The whole of Libona is my parish, with some 20,000 people. I really need six bishops for my assistants, but do not even have one assistant. In place of 'Alagad,' I have some 20 lay men called 'Alagad.' Some are very capable and generous with their time. They conduct prayer services in place of Mass, prepare couples for

marriage, the time of baptisms, funerals, counsel the people and relieve the priest of many problems.

"Besides the Alagad, I have about 50 catechists. All of them were here for a live-in workshop for seven days in April. Six catechists were taking a summer in the diocese institute for catechetics and two are taking a college course in religious education. They are supported by the parish. We also send catechists and Alagads to three-day retreats when we can. I should be glad to pay them a small salary, but I have no available funds for that purpose. I think that some nuns would be a great asset to my parish. I have no place for them to live at present, and no way of supporting them, but who is going to stop me from thinking about the good they would do if ministering in my parish."

Father Welch is the kind of Jesuit I have revered since I first read the life of St. Ignatius by Francis Thompson in St. Bernard's Seminary in 1932. Father Welch's niece, Sister Diane Dennie (principal of St. Lawrence School, Rochester) and his grand niece, Barbara Dennie (just graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and soon to study sign language at the famous Gallaudet College in Washington, founded by Abraham Lincoln) visited the uncle in July. Unfortunately, he was sick, in the hospital one week and at the rectory which he shares with 14 youngsters whom he brought in from the country and supplies with housing, food and education. He had a serious leg infection.

I asked Father Welch's sister, Connie Welch: "He's 78 years old. Is he still banging around on a motorcycle?" She said: "The bishop and priests tell him he should not, but he has to get around to his people." Sister Diane Dennie has some impressive slides which she has arranged for a lecture about Father Welch's mission, and she is available to talk to youth groups, church and civic groups. Why not give her an invitation? Sister Diane Dennie, St. Lawrence School, 1000 N. Greece Road, Rochester N.Y. 14626. Phone: (716)225-5870. It should be an edifying evening.

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