



A Word for Sunday

Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 3:1-6; (R1) Baruch 5:1-9; (R2) Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11.

In the fifteenth year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar (about 26 or 27 A.D.), Tiberius was an old man of 71. The elder Pliny, later killed in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, was about four years old. Vespasian, who was to crush Jerusalem, was a youth of 19. Caligula, one day to be the mad emperor, was 16. Claudius, a lame and trembling man, was 38 and would be emperor. In that 15th year, the daughter of the ill-fated Germanicus was married, and nine years later Nero was born. Great names all — yet God passed over them all and His voice was spoken to John. Perhaps only historians know of the celebrated Romans, but mothers even to this day name their sons after John.

Four figures dominate the preparation for Christmas: David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, and Mary, mother of God.

Luke situates John's coming in the historical milieu of his day. He does this not only because that was the style of most Greek historians, but especially because Luke saw John chiefly as a prophet. Luke's concern was not with the baptism of John, that was only incidental; Luke's concern was with John as a prophet. John was first and foremost a prophet, the greatest of the prophets, the bridge between the two testaments.

Hence St. Luke describes his vocation like that of any other prophet. First, he gives the political and religious situation of the time, then the call: "the word of God was spoken. Then comes his name, John, and finally his filiation as son of Zecharias. "The word of God was spoken to him," far from the political and religious centers of the world, "in the desert." Yet that word would go out to the ends of the earth and confront political and religious leaders at all levels.

What, therefore, is important about John is not his baptism but his prophetic role: his message, his call to repentance and reform. His baptism was only a ritual, expressing one's willingness to join his renewal movement as a preparation for the Messiah.

John's role is compared to that of the great prophet, the second Isaiah, who

was asked of comfort God's people in exile around 540 B.C. (40:1-2) and to prepare them for the Lord's coming to bring them back to Israel in a new exodus. The exodus from Egypt was from slavery; it was achieved through death and the shedding of blood. The exodus from Babylon was from exile and was effected peacefully and joyfully. John, too, was to prepare God's people for a new exodus, but not from political slavery or exile but from the far worse spiritual slavery of sin and exile from paradise. St. Luke extends the quotation from Second Isaiah further than Mark or Matthew do to include the promise of universal salvation — a theme dear to Luke and his Gentile readers. "All mankind shall see the salvation of God."

John's was to be "a herald's voice in the desert, crying, 'Make ready the way of the Lord.'" This is Oriental imagery. When a monarch was about to make a journey, a servant was sent ahead to prepare the highway. Valleys needed to be filled, mountains and hills leveled, winding paths made straight and rough ways smooth. So to be ready to receive the Messiah, moral obstacles had to be removed; people must repent of their sins.

Repentance. What is it? Once a lady walked in her garden to gather some roses. She went to a bush laden with them and proceeded to pluck the most beautiful ones. As she did, a black snake, hidden in the bush, coiled itself around her arm. The lady was terrified. She ran from the garden screaming, almost in convulsions. It was a long time before she could be quieted. The lady did not die, but you cannot persuade her to go near the rose bushes in her garden, much less to pluck them.

So does one act who is repentant. He thinks of sin as a serpent that once wrapped itself around him. He hates it, dreads it, flees from it, shuns the places where it dwells. He will no more play with sin than would the lady fondle snakes. That's repentance. It is not a mystical experience, but plain, simple, practical abhorrence of sin — a turning of one's back on greed, unkindness, violence, immorality, anything against the will of God. Such persons shall see the salvation of God.

On the Right Side

Father Paul J. Cuddy



Father Charles Latus, diocesan personnel director, phoned me Nov. 7. "Father Al Ryan has had a heart attack. Could you take Mass, just for two Sundays?" I said I would be glad to. I had substituted for Father Dick Tormey in 1979, and recalled the parish as stable and devout. Father John O'Malley was pastor for 19 years; Father Tormey for less than four, before his early death; Father Ryan is on his fifth year and fourth heart attack. Retired Veterans' Administration chaplain Father Whitey Bialaszewski and Bath VA chaplain Kiskey are helping out in this emergency.

Bath parish is outstanding in its music. The choir is directed by Richard Drain, a high school music teacher, and has 30 members. Jim Grimm is a superb organist. The two give the people quality music, and hymns not only of recent creation, but also hymns loved and sung by generations: "Panis Angelicus," "O Esca Viatorum," Dobici's "Soul of My Saviour," "Dear Angel." To hear these melodies warms the hearts of those who knew the music of many generations, now rigidly suppressed in most parishes.

With my departure from Bath Sunday, Nov. 17, the parish was richer by 500 copies of "Treasury of Prayers," rosary beads and other devotional material. The Bob Abbeys bought 10 Sheen tapes. "I hope you are spreading them around, not letting them collect dust," I said. "Oh, we keep them circulating. This is an apostate." I was happy to meet again Lima's Jim Clark, who is now manager of the Bath radio station. The a cousin of Sister Marie Michelle Peartree, president of St. Ann's Home/The Heritage, he teaches eighth-grade religious instruction.

A week earlier, Father Paul Schnacky of Wayland had phoned: "I'm scheduled for three days' retreat at Stella Niagara. Ordinarily Monsignor Art Rattigan helps me, but he's at Strong Memorial Hospital with a stroke. Could you cover for Monday and Tuesday?"

"Yes," I said. "I go to Bath Saturday night, and it is only 22 miles beyond Wayland. And I will come back Sunday afternoon. When I'm enroute to Bath Saturday, let me take you to supper after your Saturday 5:15 Mass." We went to Jim's Diner and each got a small julienne salad, big enough to feed a mule. He gave me a key to the rectory, so I let myself in Sunday at 3 p.m., coming from Bath.

Wayland is an edifying parish. The morning Mass has 30 worshippers. The Monday novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help brought 62 souls. The school has 125 children; three sisters, Concetta, Stanislaus and Mary Noel; plus dedicated lay teachers. Sister Angela, for many years at Mt. Morris, does visitation, evangelization and cheers up everyone. Faithful Vic Gestner is an unordained deacon, helping in all church activities. Lois Vogt, sister of Father Otto Vogt, reported a survey of volunteers which revealed nine new members for the Nocturnal Adoration, 18 for the festival, seven for bingo, eight for maintenance, and two for the Legion of Mary.

Since Hornell was only 20 miles away, I slipped to St. James Mercy Hospital to see Father Paul Gibbons, who has been there since September. He has had rough going, but seems now on the upswing. On the same corridor is a great friend, Mary Manning, who was housekeeper in Canisteo for Father Vincent Collins and Father Vogt. She is 95 and still exuberant. Then I had a quick lunch with Father Antinarelli at St. Ann's and a short visit with Father Schmidt and the three sisters of Father Mattie, Mary, Louise and Pat. I paid a call on Sister Dolores Ann Stein, RSM, to tell her: "Sister, I have heard so many good things about your running the school, I just wanted to stop and tell you so." She smiled, pleased, and said, "It's good to hear that." I wonder why so many people are reluctant to praise when praise is due.

Father Lavery

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ultimately led to the TAP award program), increasing the availability of dormitories, and Bundy aid.

Father Lavery was born May 1, 1915, in Toronto, Canada. He entered the Congregation of St. Basil in 1937, and was ordained in Toronto in 1942. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in philosophy at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto in 1937 and 1940 respectively, and in 1950 earned a doctorate in political science with a specialization in international law from the University of Chicago.

Father Lavery taught at Rochester's Aquinas Institute from 1940 to '41, and then at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, in 1948. He later returned to Toronto, where he served as registrar and vice president of St. Michael's College until 1958, when he became president of St. John Fisher College.

While serving as Fisher's president in Rochester, Father Lavery devoted his service to many civic groups, including: the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Area Educational Television Association, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rochester Chamber Orchestra, the advisory board of the Junior League, the Board of Overseers of Strong Memorial Hospital, the Board of St. Mary's Hospital Foundation, and was vice president of Natural Family Planning.

As a result of his service, Father Lavery

received many honors, including: Kiwanis Citizen of the Year, 1971; Monroe County Civic Award, 1972; Phi Delta Kappa Educator of the Year Award, 1977; and the Masons' Distinguished Community Service Award, 1980.

Most recently, he was chairman of the campaign for WXXI Radio 1370AM.

"He will have a wonderful reunion when he goes to heaven," Monsignor John E. Maney, former chancellor and vicar general of the Diocese of Rochester, had said at Father Lavery's testimonial dinner.

Until they are reunited with Father Lavery in heaven, parishioners of St. Louis in Pittsford, where he served Mass on weekends, will miss him greatly.

Free Inoculations

The Greater Rochester/Finger Lakes Chapter of the Muscular Dystrophy Association is offering free anti-influenza inoculations to patients with muscular dystrophy or related neuromuscular diseases covered by the association's programs.

The association will pay for flu shots for its patients, whether the shots are administered by patients' personal physicians or by physicians at MDA clinics. Clinics in the Rochester area are located at the University of Rochester Medical Center and Strong Memorial Hospital.

For information, call Joyce Marasco, (716)424-6560.

El Obispo

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puertorriquena necesita más hombres y mujeres que se den totalmente a la comunidad — siempre hemos sufrido la falta de eso," dijo el obispo. "Hay muchos que quieren obtener, pero muy pocos que están dispuestos a dar.

La vocación de ser diácono permanente es tan vocación como la de ser sacerdote," añadió. "Las comunidades hispanas y puertorriqueñas tienen muchos hombres que han sido llamados a esa vocación. Ellos podrían tener mejores trabajos, tal vez ganar más dinero, pero sacrifican su tiempo a la Iglesia y a las necesidades del pueblo. Y las esposas de los diáconos son tan sacrificadas como los diáconos. Ellas responden a una llamada lo cual es un regalo de Dios."

La Iglesia St. Francis Xavier/Holy Redeemer estaba casi llena para la misa del obispo el viernes pasado. El altar también estaba lleno de concelebrantes de los al-

rededores de la diócesis y de más allá, incluyendo al Padre Jack Podsiadlo, que vino de visita de la ciudad de Nueva York. Los coros de diferentes iglesias se combinaron para proveer la música.

El Obispo Corrada del Río dió una homilía acerca de La Divina Providencia hablando en ocasiones con jovialidad y en otras ardentemente. "Dios guía nuestro destino," le recordó a la congregación. Confiando en su providencia no tenemos que temerle ni a la competencia de armas ni a las enfermedades de la guerra, dijo. Luego en uno de los salones de la iglesia, el obispo fue homenajeado por sus contribuciones locales, por varios grupos y organizaciones, incluyendo el concilio de la ciudad de Rochester; el Padre John Mulligan de la División Diocesana de Servicios Urbanos; y los diáconos, antiguos discípulos suyos.

"Echo de menos a Rochester," dijo el Obispo Corrada del Río. "No el tiempo, pero si la gran bondad de la gente."

Christmas Celebration

Church Women United members will present their annual Christmas celebration, Friday, Dec. 6, at Brighton Reformed Church, 805 Blossom Road.

Sister Jean Marie Kearse, R.S.M., will open the program at 11 a.m. with a

Christmas meditation. A concert featuring the Church Women United choir led by June Horton will follow at 1 p.m.

Participants should bring a bag lunch. For more information, call (716)454-1813 between 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Christmas Concert

A program of religious, traditional and popular Christmas music will be presented by the Irondequoit Community Concert Band on Sunday, Dec. 8, at 3 p.m. at Eastridge High School, East Ridge Road, Irondequoit.

The band is composed of amateur musicians from Irondequoit and other surround-

ing communities, and is under the direction of David Schantz.

Admission is free, and the concert is open to the public. The program also includes a visit by Santa Claus and refreshments after the concert.

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