

The Bible Corner

Cindy Cottone

The Witness

The beach was deserted except for the two men. Pink traces of dawn still hung in the clear morning sky and the sun was just making its appearance over the water. The fishermen had already cast off into the Sea of Galilee. These two men sat in silence for a long time. Each of them was thinking about the Master who was now gone. John, the apostle Jesus loved, spoke first.

"It's not the end, just the beginning," he said. "We have been chosen to go on from here."

John's words hung in the air for a long time before his companion, Matthias, answered. "But John," Matthias said sadly, "it's just not the same without Jesus being right here with us. He was our strength, and I miss Him."

"I miss Him too, Matthias," said John. "But don't you understand yet? Jesus came to show us the way. And He appointed us to be His witnesses. It's not supposed to stop with just us. We must tell everyone — the whole world — about the new life Jesus promised."

"I want to, John, I really do, but I'm afraid," replied Matthias. "What if people won't listen? What if I'm not strong enough? What if I'm like —" Matthias stopped in mid-sentence.

"What if you're like what?" John asked.

"Like Judas. He was put to the test and he failed miserably. Judas died in disgrace," Matthias said.

"Maybe if you had been at our last meal together, you wouldn't be feeling like this," John answered. "Jesus knew that he was going to die the next day. He told us not to be afraid. He said that even though He was going back to His Father, He would never leave us. And He called us all His friends."

"How can I know for sure that Jesus is really here with me?" Matthias asked.

"Jesus promised us that if we would have the faith to believe in Him, then He would give us His power and strength. All we have to do is believe in Him with all of our hearts."

"I do believe in Him," Matthias replied. "I knew that He was the Messiah from the very first time that I saw Him."

"Then be a witness, Matthias. Tell everyone about Jesus' miracles. You were there; you saw it all happen. It won't be easy. Jesus never said that we would have an easy life. Don't expect to receive any kind words of praise from other people. But in the end, it will all be

worth it. Don't be afraid, Matthias. Trust Jesus instead."

"Is that what Jesus meant when He told us about His gift of peace?" Matthias asked.

"Yes, now you are starting to understand," John replied. "His peace isn't like any peace you'll ever find in this world. It's a feeling deep within your heart that Jesus is right here with you. Tomorrow, when we gather with the others to choose someone to take the place of Judas, I'm going to nominate you, Matthias. I think you are the best person for the job."

The next day, in Jerusalem, a prayer meeting was held in an upper room of the house where the 11 apostles were staying. There were 120 people gathered there with the apostles.

Peter stood before the group and said, "The time has come to choose a new apostle to do the work that Judas was supposed to do. He will join with the 11 of us to be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Let us select someone who has been among us from the time Jesus was baptized until He ascended into heaven."

The people there nominated two men — Joseph Justus and Matthias. Then Peter told them to pray that the right man would be chosen. Matthias said this prayer: "Oh, Lord, I know that at this moment You are right here with us. I want to tell others all about You. Give me the courage to be a good witness for you, Jesus."

After all the people had prayed, they drew straws, and the choice fell to Matthias. And that is how Matthias came to be the new apostle with the 11 others.

For discussion:

1) Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead on Easter, He ascended bodily into heaven. Is Jesus really gone from our lives now?

2) What was the new life that Jesus promised at the Last Supper?

3) Why was it necessary to choose a new apostle?

4) Jesus appointed His apostles to be the witnesses of His life for the whole world. How can Christians be witnesses today?

For further reading:

Jesus promises to John at the Last Supper are for anyone who chooses to follow Him. These promises are found in the Gospel of John, Chapters 14 and 15.

'Changes in the Church'

The Newman Community of the University of Rochester is sponsoring a program entitled "Changes in the Church: The Charles Curran Case," on Tuesday, April 15 at 8 p.m. at the University's Interfaith

Chapel. The evening's speaker will be Dr. Nathan Kollar, professor of religious studies at St. John Fisher College. The lecture is free and open to the public.

ATTENTION FUNDRAISERS
Scouts * Church Groups * Charities * Schools

Choose from over 2000 products
Reach your financial goals

UP TO 100% PRODUCTS

GKB Enterprises
Ask for Greg
426-1704 ext 5

NEXT-TO-NEW SALE
Blessed Sacrament School Hall
Monroe Ave. at Oxford St.

Thursday, April 10th - 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Friday, April 11th - 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Saturday, April 12th - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
(Half Price)

Come for Lunch or Supper!

Retain This Certificate

FREE...

Market Analysis Of Your Home

How much is your home worth today? I will prepare a Market Analysis of your residential property at no cost or obligation.

DEE PIAZZA
227-3586
or
586-2100
R.J. RUSSELL ASSOCIATES, INC.

8 N. Main Street, Pittsford, N.Y.



A Word for Sunday

Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 21:1-19; (R1) Acts 5:27-32; (R2) Revelations 5:11-14.

The second reading for next Sunday is taken from the book of Revelations. When one cuts through the symbolism of the book and decodes it, two things become immediately apparent: the strong images of Christ and the profound reverence accorded Him by the saints and angels in heaven.

With unabashed awe, John records a vision of Jesus Christ and the reverence shown to Him by the countless hosts of heaven. Tens of thousands cried out, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive... honor and glory and praise!"

One of the most tragic losses in American life today is the loss of a sense of reverence and respect for all things good and holy. Today, society's Richter scale would register a strong reading of irreverence in our land. The United States Supreme Court, by its un-American decisions in the last decades, opened the Pandora's box to goddess secularism and pornography. For decades now, at least since 1962, the media have been chipping away at the moral foundations of America. Best-selling novels like Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, even required reading in high schools, are peppered with a profanity that made previous generations see blue. The movies are consistently and methodically undermining all respect for authority — for instance, the Poliee Academy series. So much of television is not only disgusting but dehumanizing. More and more of our youth are drawing their moral code of behavior from it.

A recent article in Time Magazine (December 9, 1985) contained the following observation: "The number of unwed children having children is soaring out of control. It's not just a ghetto problem, or an East Coast dilemma — it's a social epidemic that affects us all."

The Conference Update of the Bishops of New York State also addressed teen pregnancy as recently as January of this year. It stated that 50 percent of all American teenagers have had intimate sexual relations by the time they are 18. This represents a 60 percent increase over the past 10 years.

The causes of this dramatic trend are numerous and complex, according to the update. External influences include the permissiveness flourishing in today's music, literature, television and movies, pressuring our youth to engage in sexual activities void of any moral values or commitment. Internal influences include adolescents' needs for affection and love, their rebelliousness and desire for independence and their struggle to escape from loneliness or familial problems.

The Conference recommended that the following initiatives be taken:

1) A concentrated mass media/public education campaign to alert teenagers to the medical, social and economic dangers and the folly of sexual activity outside of marriage.

2) Family life education programs should be carried out in schools. These programs would emphasize self-worth and traditional family values, to enable the teenagers to form a right conscience about sexual activity.

3) Family life education programs should be designed so that parents could increase communication with their children and assist them in countering the pro-sex message of the media.

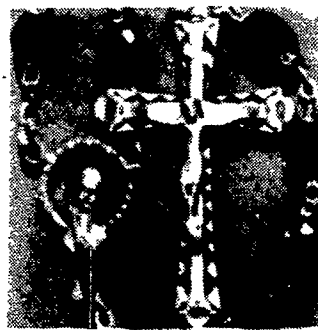
I might add a final suggestion: that we make our homes once again what Pope John Paul said they ought to be — "domestic churches," little churches reflecting the big Church.

The big Church prays the Divine Office morning and night; the little church should have morning and evening prayers as well. The big Church reads the scriptures; the little church should have scripture reading. Every home should enshrine the Bible, as Father Bart O'Brien so dramatically urges in his wonderful parish missions.

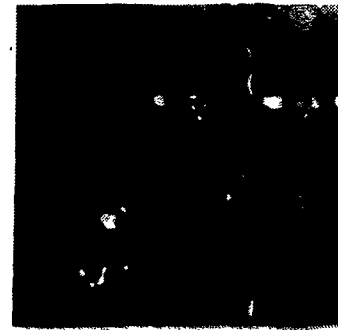
The big Church receives the sacraments; the little church should prepare its children to receive them: confession, communion and confirmation. The big Church is devoted to Jesus and Mary; the little church should have their pictures in the home and pray the family rosary daily. The big Church prays at Mass; the little church should say grace at meals.

Devotion begets devotion, reverence and respect.

LADIES' AND MEN'S ROSARIES



LADIES'
6mm Fire Polished
Crystal-like Beads.
Length 22"



MEN'S
Genuine Natural
Brown Coco Beads.
Length 20"

Covenant Bookstore takes immense pride in offering you their most beautiful, his and hers rosaries. We guarantee you will be more than delighted with their brilliance and high quality. With each Rosary ordered, you will also receive a free scapular.

Covenant Bookstore, Inc.

(716) 266-4058

563 Titus Ave., Rochester, N.Y. 14617

Please send me at once, (check one) _____ (ladies') _____ (men's) _____ (both) rosary(s) at only \$8.99 each plus .63 tax and \$1.00 for postage and handling, or only \$17.00 for both rosaries, plus \$1.19 tax and \$1.00 for postage and handling.

I am enclosing check or money order for \$10.62 payment in full for one rosary, as indicated above.

I am enclosing check or money order for \$19.19 payment in full for two rosaries, as indicated above.

Mail my Gift-boxed Rosary(s) to: (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(allow 2-3 weeks for delivery)