

Father Albert Shamon

A Word for Sunday



Easter Sunday

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 20:1-9; (R1) Acts 10:34, 37-43; (R2) Colossians 3:1-4.

In His revelations to Sister M. Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938), our Blessed Lord asked that a "Feast of Mercy" be officially established in the Church. He declared that it be celebrated with great solemnity on the first Sunday after Easter. "I desire," Jesus said to her, "that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. The very depths of my tender mercy are open on that day. I pour out a whole ocean of grace upon souls who will approach the font of my mercy."

Later on, our Lord defined the font of mercy: it was first of all the confessional. "The soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment..."

Regarding confession, our Lord stated, "When you go to confession, know this, that I myself am waiting for you in the confessional. I am only hidden by the priest, but I myself act in the soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of Mercy. Tell souls that from this font of mercy, souls draw graces solely with the vessel of trust. If their trust is great, there is no limit to my generosity."

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the conditions for obtaining the great promise of complete forgiveness of sin and the punishment due to them. The other condition is the worthy reception of Holy Communion on the Feast of Mercy itself, the First Sunday after Easter. Jesus called sacramental confession and Eucharistic Communion the fonts of Mercy.

It is significant that the institution of the Sacrament of Penance is proclaimed in the gospel on the first Sunday after Easter — the Sunday our Lord wished that the Feast of Mercy be celebrated. It is also a wonderful time to fulfill one's annual Easter Eucharist (the Easter Duty, Canon 920).

To celebrate the Feast of God's Mercy,

two things are suggested: 1) go to sacramental confession on any day around that Sunday and to Holy Communion on the Sunday itself; and, in addition, 2) make the novena to the Divine Mercy. Jesus asked for this and asked that it start on Good Friday!

If you wish a complete pamphlet on the Mercy of God Devotion, with the novena, just send me a self-addressed stamped envelope (Rev. Albert J.M. Shamon, 5 S. Marvine Ave. Auburn, N.Y. 13021).

In 1958, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith prohibited this devotion to God's mercy as set forth by Sister Faustina. She had predicted that this would happen. In 1978, the ban was lifted through the efforts of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, then Archbishop of Cracow, where Sister Faustina had lived and died. Six months later, this champion of her cause was elevated to the chair of Peter as Pope John Paul II.

His first encyclical was on the subject of mercy: *Dives in Misericordia* (Rich in Mercy), issued on November 30, 1980. In it he wrote, "Right from the beginning of my ministry in St. Peter's See in Rome, I considered this message my special task."

It is sad today to see how many shrug off private revelation, simply because it is privately revealed. Private revelation is never new revelation, but only a reaffirmation of some truth or truths of public revelation either forgotten or neglected, but of critical importance for the age in which it is made. It is the Holy Spirit picking out of the smorgasbord of public revelation those truths that are needed for the nourishment of a particular age.

At the first half of this century, God made two private revelations that are relevant to the 20th century: one at Fatima to three shepherd children, and one at Cracow to Sister M. Faustina. Both urged special devotions: one to the rosary and the scapular; the other to God's mercy.

Devotions nourish devotion. And devotion is the ready will do to God's will — even when revealed in authentic private revelation.

Cindy Bassett

The Bible Corner



Memoriam

Just outside the city limits of Jerusalem, there once was a small stretch of land known as the Potters' Field. There was no great story behind its name; the plot of land held an abundance of rich clay, which the potters used in their trade.

One day, due to a series of events, all that changed abruptly. This seemingly unimportant field was purchased from the potters and transformed into a cemetery for foreigners who died in Jerusalem. Due to the nature of the death of the first person buried there, Potters' Field became known throughout the entire world.

Late one Friday afternoon, just before the Sabbath, an old man knelt beside the first grave in Potters' Field. The victim had died suddenly, by his own hand, leaving those who knew him to forever ponder the reasons. The solitary old man had kept a vigil there for some time. His anguish was apparent and, unable to hold back his sorrow any longer, he broke the silence of the place, crying:

"Oh, Judas, what legacy have you left the world? What will people say of you now that you are gone? I'm your father and I don't know what answer to give those who speak of you in hushed tones of disapproval.

"You started off your life well enough. Judas, son of Simon, had all the advantages of wealth. For a time, I thought you would become a great doctor of the law. You pursued that interest for several years, appearing to have almost a vengeance for knowledge. And then, for no apparent reason, it all became distasteful to you. You turned your back not only on the law, but on your whole family as well. We lost track of you, and you drifted farther and farther away from us, always following after some new cause that had caught your interest.

"It is fitting, Judas, that you are buried here in a foreigner's grave. You've been a stranger to me for many years. And it was, after all, your own 30 pieces of silver that purchased this whole field. The chief priests paid you well for turning in Jesus.

"What do you want done with your

son's body?' they asked me. 'He is a Jew,' I protested, 'and must be given a proper burial.'

"Were you a Jew, Judas? Perhaps your biggest shortcoming was that you were always so indecisive about it. When you chose to follow Jesus, I didn't understand. But I felt a great sense of relief. Jesus was known throughout the region as a great healer, a miracle man. I hoped that somehow, you, too, would be healed.

"But, instead, my son, you betrayed Jesus. Why, Judas? I tried to find some of Jesus' followers. When they heard that he had been condemned to die, they had all fled in fear for their own lives. I wonder how Jesus felt as he hung there dying on that cross.

"You know something, Judas? Somehow, I think Jesus understood. There was something very special about Him. Today some very strange things happened in Jerusalem. This afternoon, darkness fell on the city for three hours, and the earth shook. Just before I left the temple, the curtain that set off the Holiest Place was split apart from top to bottom. And throughout the entire region, people began saying that Jesus was the son of God. Not even His death silenced them.

"The priests told me that you returned the money that they had paid you. You must have been sorry, Judas. Yes, I think Jesus would have understood. Just before He died, he said the oddest thing. He cried, 'Father, forgive these people, for they don't know what they are doing.'"

The old man was standing now. Just before he turned to leave, he said, "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on Judas! Rest in peace, my son."

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The news of Judas' suicide spread quickly throughout the entire region. As a result, Potters' Field became known as "The Field of Blood." An ancient prophecy of Jeremiah had been fulfilled: "They took 30 pieces of silver — the price at which He was valued by the people of Israel — and purchased a field from the potters as the Lord directed" (Matthew 27:9-10).

Dear Jesus, help me never to be so hopeless that I think I am beyond your healing powers of forgiveness.

Testimonial dinner to honor departing Notre Dame rector

The Notre Dame League is planning a testimonial dinner for Father Leo F. Dunn, CSSR, who is concluding his tenure as rector

St. Michael's seeks alumni for anniversary celebration

Alumni of St. Michael's School in Penn Yan are invited to participate in a celebration of the 105th anniversary of the placing of the school's cornerstone. The event will take place on Thursday, May 14. Graduates are urged to send updated mailing information to St. Michael's School, Alumni Search Committee, 214 Keuka St., Penn Yan, 14527.

of Notre Dame Retreat House in Canandaigua. He will receive a new assignment in June.

The dinner is set for Sunday, May 17, at Packett's Landing Inn in Fairport. A reception will begin at 4 p.m., with dinner at 5 p.m.

Father Dunn has influenced hundreds of retreatants during his six-year tenure at Notre Dame.

Tickets for the dinner are priced at \$15 per person, and reservations must be received no later than April 30. Mail checks — payable to the Father Dunn Testimonial — to Notre Dame Retreat House, Foster Road, Canandaigua, N.Y. 14424.

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Otetiana Council selling tickets to 1987 Scout Show

The 15,000 Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and Explorers who comprise the Otetiana Council of the Boy Scouts of America are now involved in a major effort to sell tickets for their upcoming Scout Show 1987. The show, which is set for Friday, May 8, and Saturday, May 9, is a biennial display of scouting skills.

The theme of the 1987 show is "The Best of the Best," which reflects Scouting's emphasis on teamwork and achievement.

Scouts are now selling tickets door to door. In addition to show admission, tickets are also worth \$1 off purchases at Rochester-area Wendy's restaurants. Proceeds from the show will go toward such

activities as camping trips. Call (716)244-4210 for information.

Retreat set at Mt. Saviour

A weekend of Directed Prayer is scheduled for June 5, 6 and 7 at the Mt. Saviour Monastery in Pine City. Facilitators for the weekend retreat, which will run from 7:30 p.m. on Friday until 2 p.m. on Sunday, will be Sister Judy Reger, SSJ, and Joyce Trifoso. Reservations are necessary by May 1.

Call Joanna Carroll at (607)562-3859 for information and reservations.

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