

Father Albert Shamon

# A Word for Sunday



## Lessons from the parables

**Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 13:44-52; (R1) 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12; (R2) Romans 8:28-30.**

At long last, we come to the end of chapter 13, the third discourse in Matthew's gospel. It comprises seven parables: the parables of the sower, weeds, mustard seed, leaven treasure, pearl and dragnet. The first half of the chapter culminates in Jesus' rejection by the Jews; the second half presents Jesus' turning away from them and turning to His disciples to explain the parable of the sower and instruct them further in the Kingdom.

The parable of the weeds teaches that belonging to the Church is not enough. In the Church, there can be weeds.

This Sunday's parables single out those in the Church who are not weeds; namely, those who sell all they have to possess the treasure, the pearl of true discipleship.

The parable of the dragnet counterbalances that of the weeds. Both teach the same message: good and evil will coexist in the Church, and only at the end will they be forever separated.

Jesus concludes these parables with the observation that, just as new insights regarding the Kingdom can be drawn from old, familiar stories (which the parables are), so the understanding heart will discover, from the old teachings of Israel, what is new.

In the first reading, Solomon prays for an understanding heart — the grace we should seek in Sunday's liturgy. Such a heart is the treasure, the pearl of great price.

Our sin today is hardness of heart: the loss of a sense of sin. "Sin is no longer acknowledged as an evil!" Our Lady said to Father Gobbi. "It is no longer confessed!"

How did we get that way? We got that way because we have no time for prayer or confession.

At Medjugorje, Yugoslavia, practically every one of more than 2,000 apparitions, Our Lady pleaded for prayer. "Pray, pray, pray," she insisted. We are sick, she implied. If you don't eat, you are sick. If you don't pray, you are sick. You have lost your appetite for God.

The appetite grows with eating; so our appetite for prayer will come back only by praying — and not just for a few minutes a day. Who can live on a few minutes of sleep a day? Mary asked the people of

Medjugorje to pray four hours a day. When someone objected, she answered, "You don't understand; that is only one-sixth of a day!"

The prayer she asks for is the rosary — and again, not just five decades, but all 15. To say we have no time is to say we have no time for God. Yet the average person spends four hours a day watching television. By 1990, it is projected that every home will have three TV sets. This tells us that television is center stage in our homes. Television molds our lives, dictates our values and sets our schedules. As for God, He is pushed into a corner.

We must pray to understand that only when we put God back in the center of our homes and lives — and put television in the corner — will we grow in peace and holiness.

The other key to an understanding heart is frequent confession. At Medjugorje, our Lady specified monthly confession. Pope John Paul II asked priests to urge people to go to confession frequently, even for venial sins (Reconciliation and Peace, #32).

Our Lady said, "Never as in these times has the usage of frequent confession been so necessary. Today, confession is disappearing from the lives and practices of so many of my children, and this is a sign of the crisis the Church is undergoing."

"By means of you, beloved ones (her priests), I wish to have the sacrament of reconciliation in the Church brought back to its splendor. I wish all of my children to hasten in great numbers to this fountain of grace and of divine mercy" (*Our Lady Speaks to Her Beloved Priests*, p. 405).

This neglect of confession explains in large part why even some Catholics have lost the sense of sin, especially regarding sexual morality. This explains why, as the same source continues on page 508, "it can be said that there is no longer any Eucharistic celebration where sacrilegious communions are not made."

Therefore I recommend doing something concrete for this Marian Year, which represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Seize it by getting back to prayer. Make it a substantial part of your day and life, and then go back to the practice of confession once each month.

Start here. And as the disciples were led deeper into the Kingdom, so shall you be.

Cindy Bassett

# The Bible Corner



## In the very beginning

Joshua looked out over the huge crowd that had gathered before him. He had called a meeting for all of the Hebrews, not just the priests or the elders. Everyone who had entered the Promised Land sat before him. They chattered excitedly, until they saw Joshua rise and come forward to address them.

"You have been called here today for an important reason," Joshua began. "Just before Moses died on Mount Nebo, he gave me this scroll. On it was written the very words of God that were revealed to Moses." Joshua held the scroll high for all to see.

"This is our story, just as it happened, from the very beginning of time," he continued. "It tells us that God is with us always. We will also learn how to live in a way that is pleasing to the one true God. I am telling you this story so that you can pass on God's word to all generations forever," said Joshua, unrolling the scroll.

"In the very beginning, nothing existed but God," he read. "There was total silence. Suddenly, all was changed forever. For God spoke a word in this void that was so powerful that it echoed and reverberated until a great light came forth. The word was love, and on its perfect note, the world began."

"The pure white light burst forth into a chorus of the colors of life — from the brightest red, orange and yellow into the deepest shades of green, blue, indigo and violet. God divided the light from the dark into day and night."

"Then God painted the skies of heaven with stars that reflected the ever-present light of the morning star. And because of this morning star, the music first began."

"The great composer played the overture of creation, and everything came into being as an echo of the divine. Ocean waves crashed like mighty cymbals, and dry land appeared. Rivers originated as soft, trickling notes and then rushed forward into great streams."

"For God was speaking gently to each one of them. Listen," He said, "and you will know the secrets of life. Be happy and grow in knowledge, but never lose the rhythm of my music!"

"A great prayer of thanksgiving and praise rose from every member of the orchestra as they covered the earth with beauty. The plant life was soon joined by a chorus of animals. Bees buzzed a litany, while crickets accented the bass notes sounded by the frogs. And then there were the birds, which sang perhaps the most beautiful hymns of all. It would have all been utter confusion and noise if each one of them hadn't picked up the divine beat. Instead, there was absolute harmony because, in the very beginning, all was perfection."

"God saw all that had been created and said, 'Now I shall make the most beautiful instrument of all! So He took the dust of the earth and breathed His own Spirit on it. And the man that was formed possessed the strains of God's wisdom in his soul. Next, God made a woman from part of the man, and again, He placed His own song in her soul. The man, Adam, and the woman, Eve, were created in God's own image."

"God said to them both, 'I give you the entire orchestra to lead with my music. My love is too great to ever leave you. My music will play on forever. You have but to listen, and you will hear my voice. The choice is yours!'"

"When Adam and Eve looked at each other, they not only heard the music, but they saw the image of God in each other. It was love at first sight. Adam asked Eve, 'May I have this dance?'"

"And because all was perfection in the very beginning, Adam and Eve danced together in perfect time to the music, which was now in full swing!"

Scripture Reference: Genesis, Chapters 1-2.

# WHAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT DIABETES

## 271-1260

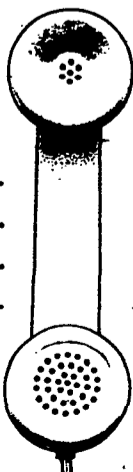
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