

Columnists

Open your hearts to her invitation

By Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's readings: (R3) Mark 1:21-28; (R1) Deuteronomy 18:15-20; (R2) 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.

Four times this Sunday we shall repeat the refrain: "If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Of course, God still speaks to us. One way this happens today is through His mother's apparitions at Medjugorje. Never in the entire history of the Church has Mary appeared daily for more than five years — speaking to and through six youths.

Since these six visionaries are seldom together and often are separated during the apparitions, collusion can be ruled out. They see a light, then Our Lady, then they fall to their knees all together within one-fifth of a second — a synchronism scientifically inexplicable, according to one Professor Joyeux.

Archbishop Franic, head of the bishops' conference of Yugoslavia, attests: "I have spoken to all six of the visionaries, and I can see that they are sincere and are telling the truth."

The visionaries' own Bishop Zanic, however, has consistently denounced the apparitions. At first, he claimed they were from the devil; then he said they were hallucinations, and finally manipulations on the part of the Franciscans.

Well, the upshot of all his opposition was for Rome to remove the matter from Bishop Zanic's hands and place the final judgment on the matter in the hands of the bishops' conference of Yugoslavia. The conference's first decree has been to permit private pilgrimages and to forbid the condemnation of the apparitions as mendacious or diabolical. While we are waiting for the final judgment of the Church, we must not harden our hearts to the messages coming from Medjugorje.

The Fatima messages were not authenticated until 12 years after they occurred. We hardened our hearts to them. We did not listen to Mary. We did not respond. The result was World War II and the spread of communism's errors — even to the United States — just as she predicted.

Would you ever have dreamed that Americans would legalize the murder of unborn ba-

A Word for Sunday

bies? Would you have dreamed that homosexuals would and could march in our streets demanding rights? Did you anticipate that hard-core pornography would become an \$11-billion-a-year business here? Or that television and irresponsible journalism would market the same values as those held in the Soviet Union? Would you have believed that under the shibboleth of separation of church and state God would be kicked out of our schools, the media and politics? All this occurred in a nation that the Supreme Court declared in 1952 to be Christian!

Well, it is happening just as, in 1917, Our Lady foretold, because we hardened our hearts to her. Now as a final grace, Mary once more is speaking to us at Medjugorje. Her primary message is of conversion. The secondary message is a warning of a terrible chastisement, worse than that of World War II, if we harden our hearts. It is a warning, not a threat; Mary never threatens. She is our Mother.

On May 23, 1985, the message of Medjugorje was: "Dear children, I invite you . . . to open your hearts to the Holy Spirit . . . Open your hearts and offer your lives to Jesus . . . Thank you because you have responded to my call!"

Dear children — she is ever the mother. I invite you — she respects our free wills. Thank you for responding to my call — like the Gospel, her message is an invitation demanding a response. We are either with or against her — we cannot drive in neutral.

Her four-point message is monthly confession, daily Mass, complete rosary, and fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Harden not your hearts!

Spies on the roof of the 'inn'

By Cindy Bassett

"Hurry! There's not a moment to spare!" Rahab yelled to the two men who were following her up to the roof. Before she fully hid them beneath the piles of flax drying on the roof, someone had begun pounding on the door of the inn. "Don't make a sound," she whispered to the two men as she went to answer the door.

"Open up, Rahab! We know the Hebrew spies are there. If you don't let us in, we'll break down the door!"

Rahab's face did not betray her sense of panic as she greeted the king's soldiers at the door. "Good evening, gentlemen," she said with forced gaiety. "What's all this fuss about?"

"The king has been informed that two men were seen coming here," one of the soldiers said. "Now step aside; we are going to search the house!"

"Of course, people have been seen entering my house," Rahab said as she allowed the soldiers to enter. "I am running an inn, after all!"

"We are well aware of what you are running, Rahab," one of the soldiers said derisively as he led the others upstairs.

"It is true that these Hebrew spies you seek were here earlier," Rahab called after them. "But I sent them on their way. What would I gain by hiding criminals?"

She listened carefully for sounds of a commotion upstairs and tried in vain to still her trembling. For months now, the city of Jericho had been buzzing about the Hebrews who were camped a short distance away. Since they had left their slavery in Egypt, they had conquered everyone in their path.

Without thinking, Rahab bowed her head and uttered a prayer to this God she had heard so much of. "Please keep them safe," she said. And when she had done so, she was immediately filled with a great sense of calm.

Finding nothing, the soldiers left. Rahab waited several minutes before she dared to let the Hebrew men out of their hiding place. When they emerged from the piles of flax, the two Hebrews were badly shaken, but they managed to introduce themselves as Salmon and Jotham.

"Salmon, I think it is best that we leave now," Jotham remarked. "You heard her say it herself: What does she have to gain by helping us. Remember, Joshua told us to trust no one."

The Bible Corner

"Jotham, you are a harsh judge," Salmon replied. "Rahab has shown much courage and kindness."

Suddenly, a clanging noise came from the street below, and the men exchanged worried glances. "The king of Jericho has ordered that the city gates be locked to keep the Hebrews out," Rahab explained. "But I know your God will give this city over to you, as He has done with so many other cities."

"For a prostitute, you seem to know much about our God," Jotham said bluntly.

Rahab looked downcast. "Yes, my sins are many," she admitted. "But I have also heard that your God is a God of great mercy, unlike the gods of my people!"

"Our God has always led us faithfully and provided for our every need, even when we were not always true to Him," Salmon replied gently.

"Remember me and my family when Jericho is destroyed," Rahab asked her guests. "I promise to worship your God for the rest of my life. Come now, I will lower you through the window to the street below. Head for the mountains and hide there for three days. By that time, the king's soldiers will have ended their search."

Just before he left, Salmon turned to Rahab and said: "Thank you, Rahab. You are right; our God is full of the same kindness and mercy you have extended to us. If you do believe in our God, leave this scarlet cord hanging from the window. All who are here with you in this house shall be saved when Jericho falls. Goodbye!"

A short time later, the walled city of Jericho was demolished by the Hebrews. Only Rahab and her relatives were spared. The Gospel writer Matthew lists Rahab as the wife of Salmon and as an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

Scripture reference: Joshua, chapters 2 and 6; Matthew 1:5.

BUSINESS COMPUTER EXPERTS

NOW IN STOCK! LEADING EDGE!

Buy & Sell Used Computers Best Prices on Software



Z.I.P. SYSTEMS
586-8067

368 W. Commercial St., East Rochester
One Source for all Computer Services

ERGO OFFICE INTERIORS

SCHOOLS — CHURCHES BUSINESSES

Complete Office & School Furnishings
Folding Tables & Chairs for Bingo
Official Furniture Supplier to the Rochester Diocese

49 St. Bridgets Dr. Rochester, NY 14605 (716) 454-4220

attie's
Est. 1940

Young Fashions

586-8655

1467 PENFIELD RD.
PANORAMA PLAZA
ROCHESTER, N.Y. 14625

MON.-FRI. 10-9
SAT. 10-6



FEATURING A LARGE SELECTION OF BEAUTIFUL DRESSES AND BOYS SUITS

"For First Holy Communion"

- ★ INFANTS
- ★ BOYS TO SIZE 20
- ★ SCHOOL UNIFORMS
- ★ GIRLS TO 14

Rund's

4-Dining Rooms ON THE RIDGE 4-Fire Places
RESTAURANT & PARTY HOUSE

SEAFOOD LOVERS PLATTER

Featuring: Broiled Lobster Tail
Broiled Shrimp
Broiled Scallops **\$10⁹⁵**

CHEF'S CHOICE BUFFET

Fri - Sat - Sunday - only

"All You Can Eat"

Featuring: full salad bar, two soups, hot vegetable, broiled fish, u-peel shrimp, crab salad, shrimp salad, a hot beef item and other chefs selections of the day. **\$9⁹⁵**

SUN-SET SPECIALS

Served daily 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm
Sunday from 12 noon to 9 pm

Featuring...
Prime Rib • Stuffed Haddock
Pork Chop • Sea Scallops
Ham Steak

\$5⁹⁵

Rund's Famous Fish Fry: Every Friday - 3:00 to 6:00 **\$4⁹⁵**

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY Party - wide screen TV
hors d'oeuvres & snacks - call for details



227-2510