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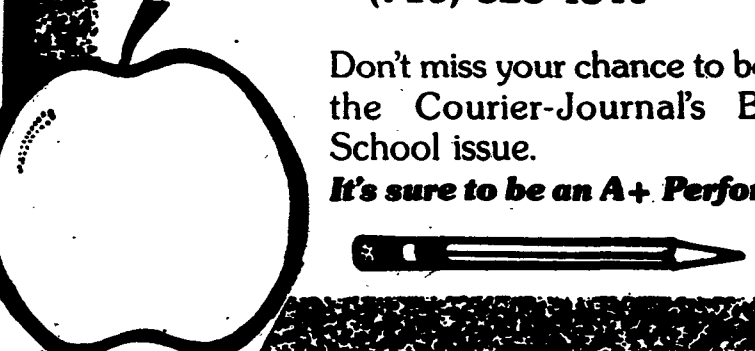
This year, the Courier-Journal will present its annual Back-to-School Supplement in the **August 11th** issue. The focus of this education supplement will cover innovative programs in the schools — including grammar, high school, and college levels.

In past years this has been one of the Courier-Journal's finest issues. Rest assured that this year will be no exception!

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Don't miss your chance to be part of the Courier-Journal's Back-to-School issue.  
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# Lessons taught by the spirit of truth

By Father Albert Shamon  
 Sunday readings: (R3) John 6:41-51; (R1) 1 Kings 19:4-8; (R2) Ephesians 4:30-5:2.

Today, the synagogue of Capernaum, like the rest of the city, is a heap of ruins. When I viewed the site a few years ago, the guide remarked that all the seashore cities of Galilee which rejected Jesus are today in ruins. I could not help but think of the words of Jesus: "As for you Capernaum ... You shall go down to the realm of death! If the miracles worked in you had taken place in Sodom, it would be standing today" (Matthew 11:23).

When Jesus referred to Himself as the bread come down from heaven, a grumble rumbled through the crowd: "The Jews started to murmur in protest." Here for the first time John calls the Galileans "Jews." Normally, he reserved this term for the Judeans, hostile to Jesus. Since the Galileans on this occasion evinced a similar hostility against Jesus, John branded them also "Jews."

The Galileans manifested their seething hatred by saying, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?" "This" was a term of contempt, much like "this upstart" or "who does this one think he is?"

John also uses the word "murmur" — the same word used of the Hebrews whom Moses led out of Egypt. These runaway slaves murmured so often during their 40-year desert sojourn that the Book of Numbers, which tells the story of that journey, is also titled "The Book of Murmurings." In the end, none of these rebels, save Joshua and Caleb, entered the Promised Land.

John lumps the Galileans in with those earlier murmurers, and tells us that a similar fate befell both groups, for the Galileans left Jesus and "would not remain in His company longer." How terribly sad!

Yet Jesus never gave up on anyone. Deeply concerned, He said, "Stop your murmuring ... Open up your hearts and listen, for no one can come to me unless the Father draws him."

Again, how wonderful the choice of words here! Jesus uses the word "draw," to make us realize that God always respects our free will.

## A Word for Sunday

"To draw" is to lure, not to force.

How does the Father draw us to Jesus? Jesus explained with a quote from Isaiah: "They shall all be taught by God?"

The "Spirit of Truth" — not a human teacher, not conscience, not experience, but God the Holy Spirit — "He will guide you to all truth" (John 16:13). Human teachers can reach only the ears; God alone can reach the heart.

Thus Thomas a Kempis remarked in *The Imitation of Christ*: "Let not Moses speak to me, but speak Thou rather, O Lord, God ... for Thou alone can perfectly instruct men, but they without Thee avail nothing. They may indeed sound forth words, but they give not the spirit. They speak well, but if Thou be silent they do not set the heart on fire. They deliver the letter, but Thou discloseth the sense. They publish mysteries, but Thou explainest the meaning ... They show the way, but Thou givest strength to walk in it. Let not then Moses speak to me, but Thou" (3,2).

What does the Spirit teach? That we all are sinners: "He will convince you of sin." That Jesus is Savior — the one who will save us from our sins; the one who will feed us with the bread that makes men strong against sin.

Jesus beseeched the hostile crowd to cease their murmuring because the Spirit teaches in a still, low voice. Hearing Him, they would be led to the truth, to Jesus. And listening to Jesus, the crowd would receive the bread of life that alone can satisfy the hunger of mind and heart.

Eating is a good cure for depression even on the natural level. On the supernatural level, depression can be cured by the word of the Lord and by the bread of life.

## Pseudo-conservative ignorance

By Father Richard P. McBrien  
 The word "conservative" is a good word, both inside and outside the Church. Conservatives are people who want to hold fast to what is abidingly true and of enduring value in their respective traditions.

Within the Church, however, the conservative label is frequently misappropriated by people who are not conservative at all.

These pseudo-conservatives talk and act like conservatives, but they differ in one crucially important respect: true conservatives know and understand the tradition they seek to preserve; pseudo-conservatives are ignorant of the tradition they believe they honor.

The recent controversy over the excommunication of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre for ordaining four bishops without papal approval is only the most recent case in point.

Pseudo-conservative Catholics feel a twinge of sympathy for Archbishop Lefebvre. They share his disdain for many of the changes wrought by the Second Vatican Council. They cannot understand why Pope John Paul II would excommunicate an archbishop with whom the pope shares so much in common. Aren't both men deeply concerned about the moral, theological, devotional, and disciplinary trends that have been at work in Catholicism since the council?

Furthermore, if the pope felt that there was no alternative to Archbishop Lefebvre's excommunication, why did he not also excommunicate theologians who have been critical of one or another official teaching of the Church?

The pseudo-conservatives' first complaint reveals their ignorance of canon law. They assume that the pope had a choice to excommunicate or not to excommunicate Archbishop Lefebvre.

Pope John Paul II did not have a choice. Excommunication is automatic in such cases.

Canon 1382 reads: "A bishop who consecrates someone a bishop and the person who receives such a consecration from a bishop without a pontifical mandate incur automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See."

The pseudo-conservatives' second complaint is the more interesting because it reveals the theological ignorance that is often masked as theological conservatism.

While the pope was at it, the pseudo-

## Essays in Theology

conservatives ask, why didn't he excommunicate theologians A, B, and C on grounds of heresy?

But what is heresy? Here is where the pseudo-conservatives' theological ignorance glows in the dark.

For the pseudo-conservative, heresy is dissent from any official teaching of the Church: infallible or noninfallible, definitive or non-definitive, dogmatic or nondogmatic.

Theology, Church history, and canon law are one on this point: Heresy is a technical term that applies only to the rejection of an infallibly defined dogma of the Church.

Since pseudo-conservatives are more suspicious of theology than they are of canon law, let's take the definition of heresy which the code provides.

Canon 751 defines heresy as "the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same."

The term "divine and catholic faith" refers to a doctrine taught with the highest authority; namely, an infallible teaching.

Not only must the alleged heretic know that he or she is rejecting an infallible teaching of the Church, but he or she must also be "obstinate" about it. The implication here is that the denial or doubt must persist over time and even after a process of challenge or dialogue with Church officials.

Not one theologian on the pseudo-conservatives' "enemies list" has ever been accused of heresy, much less declared a heretic, by any Church official or Vatican congregation — not Hans Kueng, not Charles Curran, not Edward Schillebeeckx, not Leonardo Boff. In spite of their respective difficulties with the Vatican, all remain Catholic priests in good standing. That would be impossible if they were guilty of heresy.