

# Filling in for vacationers allows pleasant encounters

By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

During the summer, retired priests are sought after to fill in for active priests on vacation. I have assisted at many places, so I am acquainted with many parishes. It delights my soul that our people are well served, not only by their pastors and deacons, but also by a multitude of lay parishioners and religious.

On Monday, Aug. 21, I was at Waterloo preparing to celebrate noonday Mass. Two brothers, around 10 and 12, were there to serve. I entered into dialogue with them.

Father Cuddy: "What's your name?"

Mike: "I'm Mike. He's Matt — Hilkert. Our grandfather is John Mull, the undertaker."

Father Cuddy: "Oh. I'm a good friend of your Uncle Bill."

Mike: "He's my godfather. Father Tom is our uncle in Rochester."

Father Cuddy: "He's a big liturgist, and the pastor of the cathedral."

Mike: (Unimpressed) "Is this going to be a normal Mass?"

Father Cuddy: "What do you mean, a



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

normal Mass?"

Matt: "We've only been serving Sundays. Is anything different?"

I was so intrigued by the brothers that I decided to go meet with the family. The boys have a brother, Ken, who is in the eighth grade at St. Mary's School. Their mother is a nurse as was her mother before her. Their father is a retired state trooper, and he coaches Little League baseball and basketball.

I asked their mother: "Do your boys ever read books or do they stick to the TV?" She said: "They are constant readers." I inquired: "Did you read to them before they went to school?" She replied: "Indeed yes. I've read to them since their infancy, and it pays off in their school work." This is something all parents and

grandparents might emulate. One of the most vivid memories of the summer is of a grandfather in Trumansburg reading to his little grandson, who looked the picture of contentment and interest sitting on the grandfather's lap.

A week later I was in Corning filling in for Father MacNamara at St. Vincent's, where Father John Murphy, pastor emeritus of Rochester's St. Lawrence, now resides in retirement. He said: "There is a luncheon meeting at St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, tomorrow. I think it's to encourage donations. They have a staggering debt."

So on Tuesday, with Father Thomas Brennan as chauffeur, Fathers Ed Foy, John Murphy and I shot over to Elmira just 15 miles away. The meeting was not a financial appeal, but a quiet, organized exposition by Sister Marie Castagnaro, SSS, administrator of St. Joseph's. She succeeded Sister Martha Gersback, SSS.

In substance she said, "Nearly all the doctors in Elmira are on the staffs of both Elmira hospitals, but some quietly sidestep St. Joseph's. This affects our patient patronage. Please do inform your patient

that they are free to choose either hospital. Usually most doctors will be quite agreeable."

It does seem that St. Joseph's Hospital, with its awesome 81-year history of generous service by the Sisters of St. Joseph, and so many dedicated doctors and nurses — many trained at St. Joseph's Nursing School — should expect the loyalty and support of many people. The hospital has just invested \$40 million in upgrading its facilities, which could be the envy of a metropolis.

A special reason I wanted to come to the Southern Tier was to meet a fine young priest who had just arrived from Kenya. He is Father Ernest Bulinda, who has been ordained one year.

Father Bulinda was sent by his bishop, Raphael Ndigni, to earn a degree at Elmira College. This was arranged by Father James Boyle, pastor of St. Mary's, Elmira. He is a friend of Bishop Raphael, who is a graduate of St. John Fisher College.

Father Boyle has also arranged for Father Ernie to reside at the rectory with the associate, Father Tim Brown, and he will do some parochial assisting.

# Greed for currency of the kingdom is a virtue

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 16:1-13; (R1) Amos 8:4-7; (R2) 1 Timothy 2:1-8.

Jesus spoke in last Sunday's Gospel of the lost: lost sheep, lost coin, lost son. Now He speaks to those who don't know they are lost: those blinded by avarice and wealth.

He tells a parable about a crooked steward. A steward was a trusted slave in charge of running his master's entire estate. This one happened to be a rascal. He was making money on the side by charging usurious commissions on business transactions. When he realized he was going to lose his job, he had the debtors write new notes that reflected the real amount owed the master, minus the steward's profit. Thus the one who owed 900 gallons of oil wrote down 450 gallons; and the one owing 1,200 bushels of wheat wrote down 960 bushels. The steward acted in this way to ingratiate himself to the debtors.

The master praised the shrewdness of the steward, not his usurious practices. Our Lord once said be wise as serpents; He did not commend their venom or poisonousness. So here, the point of the parable was that we ought to be as eager and ingenious in striving for goodness as the man of the world is in his attempt to attain money and comfort.

Consider businessmen today. How determined they are to succeed! How clever they are in choosing the right means to their ends! How indefatigable! How resourceful and resolute! If we were only

half as much committed to the work of the church as they are to making money, the world would be converted. One example springs to mind: our Catholic schools. If we had only half the marketing ability and the recruitment outreach that businessmen have, we would never need to close a single school!

To this parable, St. Luke has appended various sayings of Our Lord, joined together, as was then customary, by certain catchwords.

So besides pointing out that we ought to be smart like the crooked steward, the parable also teaches us to be honest, unlike the steward. All that we have and possess is really God's. We, too, are stewards. We ought to use, not abuse, the things that God has given us. Our bodies, for instance, are given us by God to use, not to abuse by excessive alcohol, drugs, illicit sex. Our possessions are loaned to us to share with the needy, not to hoard.

A rabbi asked a friend to invest some of his money at the highest rate of interest possible. The friend gave all the money to the poor. He then explained to the rabbi. If you are going to a foreign country, you change your money into the currency of that country. We are going to a country beyond the grave where our money is useless. We change it into the currency of that country by using it to help the poor for God's sake. The rabbi had a saying: "The rich help the poor in this world, but the poor help the rich in the world to come."

The other day, I asked a mother if her child was going to a Catholic school. She

said no. I asked her why. She said she could not afford the tuition. If we want to change our money into the currency of the Kingdom to come, we should subscribe to the adopt-a-student program! Businesses and parishes could do the same — and should — by funding Catholic secondary and elementary schools. Catholic schools deserve to survive! Their academic credentials have been demonstrated again and again. They have produced generations of leaders for the church and, best of all, they're remarkably cost-effective. What a magnificent way to use the wealth entrusted to us!

Dolly Levi of *Hello Dolly* said that money is like manure: It's no good unless



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

it is spread around, causing young things to grow.

Lastly, don't try to serve two masters: God and money. Some put all their trust in their own possessions. Jesus called such people "fools" (Luke 12:20). All our trust should be put in the Rock of Ages. Never was it known that anyone who has trusted in the Lord has ever been confounded.



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Death of a loved one is painful. There is a tendency to believe that the elderly adjust more easily because they "should" anticipate the loss. Having more time to prepare does not guarantee that grieving will be easier. The elderly may have fewer resources such as friends, money or good health. Losing a partner or long time friend may mean living life alone at a time when a person may be least able to be independent. Support from family and friends at this time is most important. Being over protective or taking away a person's independence by making decisions for them is not desirable and may be harmful. Help the elderly begin their adjustment by attending the funeral and offering specific help.

We purchase all forms of insurance to protect our family & assets, not because we expect the worst to happen, but to be prepared. Doesn't it make sense then to prepare for what will happen. Let our trained counselors assist you with the many options available in planning for a worry-free future.

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