

Prayer books help parents teach faith

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

People sometimes ask, "As a retired priest you often fill in for priests who are away. What do you do?" A recent stint in Lyons, a village located 14 miles north of Geneva with a population around 5,000, is illustrative of what I do.

For the past four years, Father Richard Orlando, pastor of St. Michael's Church in Lyons, has given me the pleasure of taking care of the parish while he is away.

The following is a list of activities that I take care of in all parishes: Sunday and daily Mass, with homily or instruction; hospital calls; Communion to the home bound; confessions; and occasional counseling. I must also be available for contingencies. During my recent stay in Lyons, there were no baptisms or weddings, but there were five funerals.

Parish and civic events in Lyons included such activities as stopping in on Sunday CCD classes between Masses; attending the parish women's club pot luck supper

(where I won a plant in a raffle) as well as the rotary club spaghetti supper at the Lyons VFW and the Boy Scouts pancake breakfast at the Elks.

A special event also took place while I was there. We evoked a high school contest for students to memorize the Ten Commandments. Five winners took home \$5 each, and they all were applauded by the congregation.

To villages where there is no religious store, I bring a display of religious supplies and set it up in the vestibule. I bring such supplies as rosary beads, medals, holy pictures, Bibles, Sheen tapes, and a large supply of books — especially children's books and prayer books.

The best selling book is *Treasury of Prayers*, a 22-page collection of traditional prayers, plus many other beautiful prayers. It is published by the Liturgical Press in Collegeville, Minn.

In January, I filled in one weekend for Father Eugene Sweeney — pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls —

under the tutelage of his vicar, Father John Gagnier.

I spoke about prayer, using the key word for the four elements of prayer — namely A.C.T.S. (A is for adoration; C is for contrition; T is for thanksgiving; and S is for supplication).

Then came the recommendation for the *Treasury of Prayers* at a bargain rate: five books for one dollar. "We do not sell one prayer book," I explained. "Why not? Because if you plant one peach tree and get the fruit from the one tree, that is good. But if you plant five trees and get the fruit from five, that is better. So, five prayer books for one dollar."

Six hundred copies were bought that Sunday after the Masses. The same week, Father Gagnier — who is grand prior of the Rochester 4th Degree Knights of Columbus — phoned me at Lyons, saying "We need 150 more copies of the *Treasury*."

Rejoice that 750 prayer books are circulating not only in Seneca Falls, but also among relatives and friends in the military,



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

make the list — albeit near the end — it reveals choices are made primarily on the basis of outward appearance, a shortcoming most of us have — young and old.

A mother called the grocery store and said, "I sent my son James for five pounds of apples. Upon weighing them, I found only four-and-a-half pounds."

The grocer answered, "Madam, our scales are regularly inspected and are correct. Have you weighed your little boy?"

As Christians, we should develop X-ray eyes and learn to look beyond appearances. Longfellow said, "If we could only read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each man's life, sorrow and suffering enough to disarm hostility."

As the healing profession uses X-rays to look within the body, so spiritual healing can come about by looking within (what Scripture calls the "heart"). That is where God looks and that is where we should look.

People judge by appearances; God measures by what's within

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Darkness and light, blindness and sight — that is the theme of next Sunday's readings. The stories of David and the blind man are good ones for catechumens and the Christian community because baptism is the sacrament of enlightenment.

We must note two things about these stories. First, God takes the initiative. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem. His Spirit rushes upon David. Jesus, the Son of God, begins the encounter with the blind man. So, in baptism, it is always God who does the calling.

Faith is a gift of God, freely given to whom He wills. He does the choosing, as infant baptism makes so clear. The baptized and those to be baptized are a chosen people, called to be a holy people, a priestly people. How joyful that should make us all. And yet how sobering because of the heights to which we are called.

And so the second point: Heart examination is in order during this season of Lent. In both stories, God sees what man does not see. "Man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart." As a result, the expected are rejected and the unexpected are accepted.

David was not even invited to the sacrificial banquet of Samuel; the blind man was ejected from the synagogue. God's ways are not ours and His thoughts are not our thoughts. It is so hard for us not to judge by appearances. It is almost comical to read that when David is brought to Samuel, the author still clings to ap-

pearances: "He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance."

In 1923, at the age of 20, K.C. Wu, the governor of Formosa, went to Princeton to take his doctorate in political science. He was interviewed by the school's dean, Andrew Fleming.

"Young man," Andrew said after looking at the round boyish face of the applicant, "you are too immature."

"Sir," replied Wu, "to judge maturity by the criterion of looks is an immature thought in itself."

Wu was promptly admitted to Princeton.

U.S. News and World Report did a survey of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 a few years ago, asking them to name one or more people they admired and would like to imitate in some way. Here was the list of their 10 favorites (in descending order): Clint Eastwood (actor); Eddie Murphy (actor); Ronald Reagan (actor, president); Jane Fonda (actress); Sally Fields (actress); Stephen Spielberg (movie maker); Pope John Paul II; Mother Teresa; Michael Jackson; and Tina Turner.

Does it surprise you that so many entertainers are on the list? People known only by their appearance? While we can take heart that a few people of substance did

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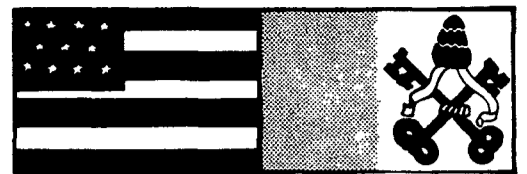
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I often give out children's books when I visit parishes as well. "As the twig is bent, so grows the tree." Wise parents and grandparents buy many books for children. There are two groups of children's books that are favorites. One is a set of 32-page booklets published by Father Lawrence Lovasik, SVD.

A favorite is "My Picture Missal." In Wayland, Father Paul Schnacky has a basket of these children's missals which he sets up in front of the church before Mass. As the children come into the church, they skip up to the basket and get their Missal, and return to their pew, armed for action.

Another group is *The Arch Books*, published by the Lutheran Concordia Press. These are Bible stories for children aged 2 to 12, presenting biblical characters from Adam through the Acts of the Apostles. They have attractive pictures, good print, and the text is in rhyme.

Visualize a child on a parent's or grandparent's lap, listening to the holy stories, discussing the pictures and the text. Religion should be taught primarily in the home.

Financial aid available

ROCHESTER — The Rochester diocese is offering financial aid for the 1990-91 school year for students attending Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

More than 700 children received \$300,000 in financial aid during 1989-90. Sources of the aid were almost evenly divided between Thanks Giving Appeal funds and an anonymous donor's contribution last August. Applications for financial aid will be available for registered students on March 8. Notification will be sent by June to families who will receive aid.

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