

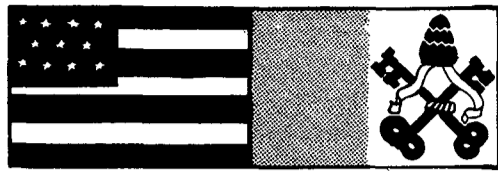
Church in Africa experiences no drought of vocations

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

Father Jerry Aman is a Jesuit from Holy Trinity Church, Webster, and a graduate from McQuaid Jesuit High School. We became friends after his ordination about 20 years ago, and I have followed his apostolate with thanksgiving to God.

Here are excerpts from a May 1 letter he wrote to me from Lagos, an African city in Nigeria: "I received your April 18 letter. It was delivered right to the door; that's unusual. For the most part, if a letter doesn't have a P.O. box number, it doesn't get through. Thank you for the \$100 check, but I regret to say it never made it. Back in October and November there was a lot of mail that never got through. Right now the postal system is at its best since I've been here."

Comment: I had written asking if he got a check which never came back to our Auburn bank. He informs me it had not so I must send him a replacement — and also another one. What a privilege to be able to do so.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

Father Aman: "Easter was tiring but very life-giving. It was different here in Lagos from Benin City (where we had been for about three years). We're a brand new parish here at Christ the King, so we had only 13 adults for baptism at the Easter Vigil. Back in Benin they had 35 baptisms this year. Next year we'll be up to about 50, and probably 100 the following year. It takes time and much hard work. We could get even larger numbers faster if we wanted to, but it's important to take our time and do catechetical preparation that will sustain our converts. The first step in the process is to train the catechists, and that's the biggest challenge."

Comment: This explains my enthusiasm

for the future of the church in Africa.

Father Aman: "I've been here at Christ the King about seven months. Unfortunately, I'm going to have to move again. We're opening up a new Jesuit house of formation in Ibadan — a city of about 3,000,000 — where I'll be involved in a work which I know is very dear to your heart: helping to train future priests. Our young Nigerian and Ghanaian Jesuits will be studying their philosophy at the major seminary in Ibadan while living in our own Jesuit community. We will be only 10 in the community this year, and probably 15 the following year. There are close to 300 seminarians in the major seminary, and I'll probably end up spiritual director for about 30 of them. I will also have responsibilities as our own superior. And I'll be doing parish work on weekends."

Comment: A happy contrast to the vocational drought in our country. Father Aman: "My cat — which I brought along to the house last October — just gave birth to six kittens. There's no doubt she's Nigerian. We've had to start a Sunday

school for our children because we don't have enough room for them and the adults in our church on Sundays. During the Masses, we get about 1,200 adults and between 500 and 600 children. The kids meet in our classroom, and it's like the battle zone over there."

At the end of Mass, the priest marches out of the church and straight into the classroom to bless the children. The secret is to do it and come out alive. When one starts to move, they all move. They like to shake your hand, which is OK. But then they don't let go. Try that some time with 500 kids around. Must we suffer the little ones?"

Comment: If our young men feel no call to the diocesan priesthood, why not consider the missionary apostolate? And many young women seem to find inspiration in orders like Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. Anyone who wishes to assist Father Aman in his work could send a check to me, and I will gladly forward it to him. My address is 10 Lewis St., Auburn, N.Y., 13021.

Holy Spirit 'fuels' the church and human spirit

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 20:19-23; (R1) Acts 2:1-11; (R2) 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is oneness. For He is love, and the bond of unity is love.

During the Eucharistic Prayers of the Mass, there are two invocations of the Holy Spirit: one before the consecration of the bread and wine, and the other one after.

Before the consecration, the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine and prays, "Lord ... let your spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The priest is addressing God the Father. He is asking Him to send His Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine. Once God the Father had sent the Spirit upon a virgin, and the Word became flesh. He is asked to repeat the miracle at every Mass: to send the Spirit so that the risen Christ might take flesh in the womb of bread and wine.

Since God infallibly hears His Church, the miracle takes place at every Mass: The bread and the wine become the risen Christ. This is the mystery of faith we proclaim at every Mass, namely, that Christ is really and truly present under the appearances of the bread and wine.

The second invocation of the Spirit comes right after the Offertory of the Mass (the prayer: "In memory of his death ... we offer up ..."). The priest with hands extended this time over the assembly prays, "May all of us who share in the



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit."

Take note of what the priest is asking here. Before the consecration, he asked the Spirit to come to change bread and wine into the physical body of Christ. Now, after the consecration, he is asking that the assembly be changed into the mystical body of Christ — the church!

He asks that this be done by the Holy Spirit. "May all who share in the body and blood of Christ" — all who receive Holy Communion, the sacrament of love — be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit, the God of love.

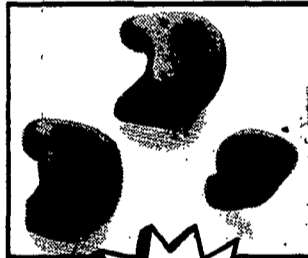
The church is a family, a communion of people made one by love. Since such unity

is possible only by the action of God, a unified Church becomes the sacrament of God's presence on earth. Thus "the church makes the Eucharist (by consecrating the bread and wine) and the Eucharist makes the church" (by the love poured out by the Holy Spirit into all who worthily receive Holy Communion).

The gift of God in the Old Testament was the Law. His gift in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. The one was given in fire on Mt. Sinai; the other also in fire on Pentecost.

When Thomas Alva Edison died in 1931, a committee met to plan a proper tribute. They thought President Herbert Hoover might order American power companies to shut off all electricity for one minute. They soon realized that even one minute without electric power would cause incalculable disruption, danger and economic loss. So the idea was abandoned.

The church and the human spirit, likewise, cannot survive — even for a minute — without the power of the Spirit.



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INVITATION TO REPARATION

MAKE THE FIVE
1st. Saturdays of Reparation

Fr. Albert Shamon, Author, Lecturer, Columnist, invites you to listen to the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ on the following stations every Sunday. WAUB-1590 Auburn, 12:30 p.m.; WSSW-99FM Seneca Falls, 6:15 p.m.; and WGVA-1240 Geneva, 7:45 a.m.

Our Lady of Victory
210 Pleasant St., Downtown Rochester
Rosary & Mass, 10 a.m. - Sacrament of Penance, 11:30 a.m.

St. Alphonsus
95 East Genesee St., Auburn, N.Y.
Sacrament of Penance, 9 a.m. - Rosary & Mass, 10 a.m.

OR MAKE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS ON YOUR OWN.



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THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Grief...

Is help available?

Grief is the name of a complex combination of physical, emotional, and spiritual experiences. It occurs when we lose someone or something very important to us.

It is a natural reaction to the realization that we are not all powerful, that we ourselves are mortal.

Everyone deals with grief in a different way.

GRIEF RESOURCE INFORMATION FORUM and the PASTORAL CARE CENTER at Rochester General Hospital jointly sponsor a monthly bereavement group called WORKING THROUGH LOSS.

The group provides information, education and peer support for adults recovering from the death of a significant person in their lives.

The group meets the first Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9:30 p.m. in the E-4 conference room at Rochester General Hospital.

Easy-to-follow signs are posted upon entering the hospital from the parking ramp.

Open to all adults. There are no dues or fees. You may attend as long as you choose.

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