

Church should make use of TV's teaching influence

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

From an educator: "For a month I have been house-bound from an accident which leaves me in bed or in a chair. Although I am a practicing Catholic, and with honest modesty claim to be more devoted to the church than the average Catholic, I am ashamed to say that I have not accepted my imprisonment with any Christian fortitude.

"However, I am writing to you about my concern and puzzlement that the church, by which I suppose I mean the bishops who oversee their flock, has so little utilized the TV. As one house-bound I have watched hours of TV. The Catholic presence is practically nil. Not the school, not the church, not even the home supersedes the tube, but everyone agrees that TV is the

Trinity is three loving persons who delight the hearts of men

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 3:16-18; (R1) Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9; (R2) 2 Corinthians 13:11-13.

The readings for Trinity Sunday do not tell us who the Trinity is, but rather what the Trinity is: persons madly in love with us. The Trinity is: one God who is a Father, "merciful and gracious (to us), slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity" (R1); a Holy Spirit, the source of "harmony and peace" among us (R2); and a Son, sent not "to condemn the world but to save it (R3)."

Have you ever been asked, "How could a loving God condemn someone to hell?" Actually, condemnation to hell is not God's choice, but ours. No one is in hell who does not want to be there.

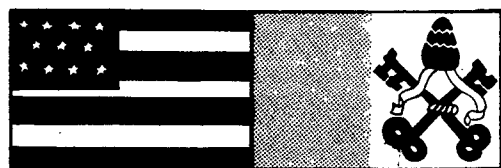
Jesus declared to Nicodemus that God loved us so much as "to give His only Son." We are free, however, and we can refuse the gift. Only those who refuse the gift condemn themselves to hell.

Moses went up on Mt. Sinai because God had commanded him. Moses thought the covenant with God was over because the people had worshipped a golden calf. Therefore, in anger he had smashed the pair of tablets God had made.

God wouldn't do something like that because, unlike Moses, he is slow to anger and merciful. Three times He called Himself "Lord," as if he was hinting at the trinity of Persons in the Godhead. More to the point, He did this to show Moses He is not at all like us, quick to anger and to call off a relationship at the first disloyalty. He is "rich in kindness and fidelity."

Every holy Mass begins in the name of the Trinity with the Sign of the Cross. Then the people are greeted with a trinitarian blessing: "May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God our Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (R2).

The sacramental grace of each Mass is to make God's people an image of the Trini-



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

most influential teacher."

Comment: Thank you for writing. Your concern has long been a concern of mine. First, my sympathy to you over your confinement, and a bit of a smile that you regret "you have not accepted your imprisonment with any Christian fortitude." Recently at a retreat at Stella Maris, Skaneateles, the retreat master said: "St. Bernadette of Lourdes had tuberculosis of

the bone, and suffered severely and frequently. One day when she was bed-ridden a severe nun said to her crossly: "What are you doing in bed?" Bernadette answered: "I'm doing my job." The nun asked with some asperity, "What job?" Bernadette answered, "Being sick."

So you see, sickness can be a spiritual job. Archbishop Sheen was an advocate of sanctifying sickness.

Now, regarding TV. What a variety: sports, Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour — a fair and balanced report quite in contrast to most of the evening newscasts that are constantly slighted against the church and omit what might be favorable. For example, one night I watched five minutes of a newscast. Four minutes were given to abortionists and a minute was spent on pro-lifers.

Another example is the pope's recent trip to Mexico. Although his seven days of evangelization in Mexico were wonderfully covered by Mother Angelica's Eternal Word Television Network, the visit was almost completely ignored on the big network's newscasts.

Regarding religious presentations, the once-influential televangelists seem to have faded with the exception of Rev. Dr. Schuller, whose Sunday program is so beautifully presented. Oh, if only Fulton Sheen were here to do the same for the Catholic Church. He is not, however, and we have no one to replace him.

One bright spot to what's available on TV is Mother Angelica and her EWTN staff. She is not a favorite of Father Richard McBrien, who wrote his outrage in his syndicated column when the U.S.

bishops voted to collaborate with Mother Angelica's staff. "The bishops' vote has put the church in the United States back 20 years," he wrote.

To Father McBrien, Mother Angelica's presentations are contemptible. He regards the church's loyalty to the pope and to Rome, the love of many Catholic devotions — the rosary, Benediction, novenas, shrines, professions and reverence for the magisterium — are a lamentable fundamentalism.

I think it is worth looking into why large cities such as Rochester, Syracuse, Elmira and Auburn do not carry Mother Angelica. It is estimated that her network reaches, more than 15 million viewers every day. Geneva's cable system does carry the network and it reaches out to many nearby villages, including Lyons and, I believe, Canandaigua.

An Auburn channel did carry a special on the pope's recent visit to Mexico — which was glorious — and Auburnians I have spoken with are most grateful. The Rochester Knights of Columbus did start a movement to get EWTN but it seems to have slowed down. Syracuse is having a strong drive to get the network available there.

While you are convalescing, why not use your phone and pen to solicit friends and persons of influence to get Mother Angelica available in Rochester. As you wrote in your letter to me: "Not the school not the church, not even the home supersedes the tube — everyone agrees that the TV is the most influential teacher."

EWTN gives people good instruction, devotions and even entertainment.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

ty: to make many persons one people through love, poured out into us by the sacrament of love, Holy Communion, and the God of Love, the Holy Spirit. Thus we pray at Mass: "May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit" (Eucharistic Prayer 2).

A simple illustration we used to use for the Trinity was that of the sun. The sun is God the Father. The rays it sends forth is God the Son. And the heat coming from the sun and its rays is the Holy Spirit.

The sun is the source of physical good — imagine the world without the sun. The sun gives power and energy; the Trinity gives power and strength. The sun gives light; the Trinity enlightens us all. The sun produces heat; the Trinity pours into us burning love for God and neighbor. The sun heals, resists germs and infection; the Trinity heals the soul and wards off the germs and disease of sin. The sun brightens and cheers the world around us; the Trinity delights the heart of man.

Unlike the sun, however, the Trinity is not a lifeless entity. The Trinity is three loving Persons: a Father who is kind and merciful; a Holy Spirit who knits us to one another by love; and a Son who died for love of us to save us.

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