

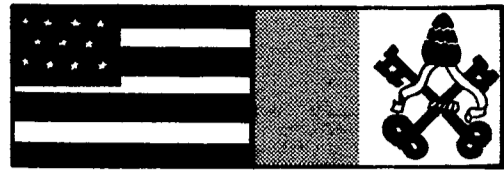
# Persian Gulf crisis touches life of family from Rose

By Father Paul Cuddy  
Courier columnist

I was in Clyde about five years ago substituting for Father Thomas F. Nellis, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church. At Sunday Mass, I noticed a Vietnamese woman with two children standing in the congregation. After Mass I hustled to the exit to welcome them.

They turned out to be the wife and two children of L.D. Densmore of Rose, which is located six miles north of Clyde. For years the Densmores have owned a fruit farm outside Rose. L.D. Densmore had been in Saudi Arabia for some years as a technician for Boeing Pleac Sentinal Company.

The mother is a Catholic. Vietnamese Catholics I have met are strong in the faith. The children, who were around 7 and 10 years old, had never been baptized,



## ON THE RIGHT SIDE

however.

The reason they weren't baptized was because of the Muslim hatred of Christianity. Not only do Muslims forbid the practice of Christian religion, but they also prohibit the use of any religious objects such as Bibles, rosaries and holy cards. In addition, no priest was available for Mass or baptism.

When I was leaving Clyde, Father Nellis arranged for Anne Buckley, a Legionaire of Mary and a former school teacher, to

prepare the two children for baptism, confession and communion. She used an excellent text entitled *Jesus and I* by Father Heeg, SJ. The book was published by Loyola Press.

The children were wonderful as they received baptism, confession and Holy Communion. I have long been a proponent of personal pursuit of souls, the shepherd or shepherdess hunting out the missing lambs and sheep.

Here are excerpts from a letter I received from L.D. Densmore, dated Sept. 6, from Saudi Arabia:

"It is now nearly three years since I left our farm in Rose and returned to Saudi Arabia on contract with Boeing Company. My wife Anna Marie and two children, David and Denise, joined me in January, 1988. I believe that was our last contact with you. The movers had packed up our

furniture and you arrived to say goodbye just prior to their departure."

After describing the shock of Saddam Hussein's seizure of Kuwait, he continued: "On August 10 the Boeing Company decided that all employees' wives and children would be temporarily relocated back to the USA until such time as the situation over here diffused ... So at least they are all safe and staying over with my brother Lester and his wife, Van, who is also my wife's sister, in Westfield, Mass. I spoke to my wife this morning as she phoned to see how things are going, and to find out when she could come back over. She is as lonesome as I am.

"David called me last evening after arriving in Leyin, Switzerland for his junior year in high school. Denise we enrolled into the 8th grade of St. Mary's parochial school in Westfield. Whenever I receive permission to bring them back, they will be on the next available plane.

"Well, I just thought you might like to be brought up to date on the Densmore family. God bless you and best wishes."

Comment: Letter writing has been an important part of my apostolate for 50 years. On Sept. 25, his wife phoned me from Massachusetts to offer her greetings. I had not sent any Christmas folder because it has a picture of the Holy Family, which would have been confiscated by Saudi officials.

It is my hope that the thousands of American Christians and other soldiers will be given their right to have religious services in their own encampments. How I wish I could be in Saudi Arabia, where there is a great opportunity for chaplains and practicing Christians to bring Christ among lonely soldiers.

It's nice for relatives and friends of our military men to keep them supplied with letters. They are very important to servicemen.

## Life is like a wedding feast when God is a priority

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Matthew 22:1-14; (R1) Isaiah 25:6-10; (R2) Philippians 4:12-14, 19-20.

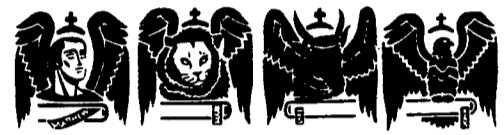
Sunday's Gospel is the parable of the Wedding Feast. God always likened heaven to a wedding banquet, not to a glorified church service.

God made us for happiness, not for hell. In the Judgment, as described by Jesus (Mt. 25:34, 41), the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

To the wicked on His left, the King will say, "Depart from me you accursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Weigh those words. Heaven was prepared for us "from the foundation of the world." We were created for happiness. Hell was not in God's original creation. Hell, you might say, was an afterthought. It was prepared only after the fall of the angels.

But — and that is a big word — we are free. That is why the Gospel is an invitation. God does not force salvation on anyone. He invites us to His heavenly banquet. The invitation has a RSVP (a *repondez s'il vous plait*: "please reply").



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

In Our Lord's parable, there were four different responses.

Two classes of people contemned the invitation outright. One class was too busy. "Some ignored the invitation and went their way, one to his farm, another to his business."

In other words, "they didn't have time" — for God, church, confession, etc. The other class consisted of the worldly minded and the downright evil, so immersed in this world that they resent those who dare to remind them of another world. Thus, John the Baptizer had his Herod; St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher had their Henry VIII.

A third class contemned the feast. In the East, it was the custom of the king to provide proper attire if one had none. Some restaurants expect diners to wear a suit coat. Should one come without a coat, the restaurant provides it. The guest in the parable despised this amenity.

The fourth class accepted the invitation heartily and sincerely. They came properly

attired.

One of the most common excuses for not responding to God's call to salvation is that of time. "I'm too busy; I don't have time; I've got so many more 'important' things to do."

Experts in time management believe there is only one way to deal with all the pressures clamoring for our attention. That way is to establish priorities.

Victor Frankl, author of *Search for Meaning*, wrote: "Unless a man wishes to drown, he has to become selective. He has to be able to select when to turn on the TV and when to turn it off; what books and papers to read and what to throw in the waste basket. Selectivism means we have to be responsible for what is important and what is not, what is valuable and what is not."

In the famous French story, *The Little Prince*, the best friend he makes on the fictitious planet to which he has been banished is a fox. When the fox must leave the prince forever, he offers to tell him the most wonderful secret in the world: "Only that which is invisible is essential."

We have crowded out God; and, without God, life is simply a whirlwind of meaningless activity. We need to focus on the Invisible, center our lives in Him and His purpose. Then, we shall discover even here that life is a feast.

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