

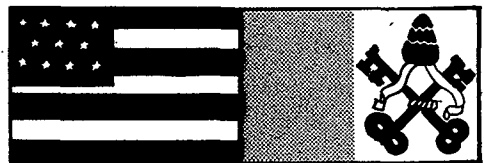
Nephew wrote that he practiced faith in Saudi Arabia

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

Two months ago I wrote to my nephew Andrew, a Marine Lieutenant in Saudi Arabia, asking him about the state of religion among American Christian soldiers.

This letter came a month ago, just before the cease-fire in the Persian Gulf. It reads:

"Mother sent me a copy of your article in the *Courier* expressing some concern over whether our troops here in Saudi were able to practice their faiths. Well, you can be certain that the Saudis aren't interfering



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

with that at all. I think most Arabs are as tolerant of other faiths as we Christians have become, with the exception of those extremists in both camps.

"One interesting note, though, is that the

Saudis do not openly permit the practice of other faiths. They just turn a blind eye to it. When we were first deployed here they insisted that our chaplains not be allowed to come, but from the very beginning they were here with their 'parishioners.' Then the chaplains were told 'no collar symbols of the faith'. This too is looked at with a blind eye.

"Two days ago our visiting priest came and said Mass for Ash Wednesday. There was a small turnout but we're in the middle of a busy time. Father Kessler is about 30 and seems not to mind serving with all of

us Marines at all. I have always been impressed with the Marines, but I am more deeply impressed by so many of the Navy personnel who serve with us — both the chaplains and the corpsmen. Without being Marines they are able and willing to put up with the same hardships — and usually with greater cheer.

"I am counting my beads every day during Lent, with a set of rosaries which a brother Knight of Columbus gave me before leaving.

"All is well here. Still keeping our fingers crossed for an end to this war before our ground troops have to be committed. It will be great to get home and see everybody. Hope all is well with you, Please keep your far-away nephew and my companions in your prayers."

Comment: It is reassuring to know that our men and women are able to practice the faith, thanks to the discreet "blind eye" of Saudi officials.

It is also heartening to know that a Knight of Columbus from the Ocean City Council, Calif., had concern enough to give Andrew rosary beads — and that he is using them. It is an instruction to all of us to encourage devotion and to furnish beads, prayer books, medals, holy cards and other instruments of devotion to friends and relatives.

During the Persian Gulf War — when the ground war was precariously near — many asked for God's help by turning to sacraments and peace vigils.

Would it not be shameful to be less earnest in our gratitude now that the carnage we all feared never came to pass? Oh, God, may we continue to be grateful in prayer, adoration and works of charity.

Death is but a doorway to our own resurrection

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) John 20:1-9; (R1) Acts 10:43, 37-43; (R2) Colossians 3:1-4.

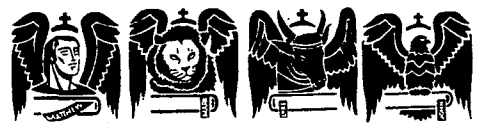
In order to stress the continuity of Easter in the life of the church, the Sundays after Easter are called the Sundays of Easter. Seven such Sundays — including Easter — make up the Sundays of Easter.

The major theme of these Sundays is joy. Other themes include the unity among Christians, the coming of the Spirit and the mission of the apostles.

During the Paschal Season, the first readings are not from the Old Testament, but from the Acts of the Apostles. In addition to the coming of the Spirit, the readings tell of the life and of the activity within the infant church.

The second readings are from the First Letter of John the apostle. This is timely because John speaks of the life of faith and love, which must be lived by all Christians — especially by those baptized at Easter.

The Gospels for these seven Sundays are from John. The accounts of the apparitions of the risen Lord will be used for Easter and the two succeeding Sundays; for the Fourth Sunday, the parable of the Good Shepherd will be used; and for the remaining Sundays, the Gospels will be excerpts from the farewell address of Our Lord after the Last Supper, describing his intimacy with his own.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

According to a Persian fable, the earth in the beginning was a great barren plain, without a single tree or plant, much like a moonscape. God sent an angel to scatter the choicest seeds over this wasteland. But Satan, determined to destroy the work of the Lord, buried all the seeds in the soil. Then he caused the rain to fall and the sun to shine in order to rot the seeds away.

But evil recoils on the evildoer. The buried seeds rotted indeed, only to germinate and spring up into countless varieties of plants and flowers. From heaven came a voice: "Thou Fool, that which you sowed, comes to life *only if it dies.*"

The enemies of Christ killed him with the feeling that they had finished him for good. Yet death was but the door to his final and glorious victory — and ours too.

For some people, the resurrection means that the teachings of Jesus are what is immortal and will go on forever.

For others, the resurrection means that the spirit of Jesus will never die, but affect men of all times and places.

For still others, the resurrection means poetry, that as the dead earth bursts forth to

life in springtime, so through Jesus hope springs eternal in the human breast.

For the believer, however, the resurrection means that life comes through death. It means that as the field must be fertilized with rotted death to become fertile, so our daily dyings to selfishness and self-centeredness will lead ultimately to our own resurrection.

Although no one was present when Christ rose from the dead — Magdalene, Peter and John saw only an empty tomb on Easter morning — we know he is risen. Even though most of us are seldom awake to see the rising sun each day, we know that it does because the world is flooded with light.

Likewise, we know Christ is risen because we see in the world today a church 2,000 years young and having multitudinous men and women dying to self and rising to help others as brothers.

Christ is risen! Christian, rise
From all sorrow; dry thine eyes!
Sin and sadness now must flee,
Christ has gained the victory!
Christ is risen! With the Spring
Rise thou, too, to greet thy King.
Deck thy heart with virtues gay
And receive Him thus today.

Buffalo Bills set to play benefit basketball game

ROCHESTER — The Buffalo Bills and a team of area celebrities will play an exhibition basketball game on Thursday, April 4, at 7 p.m. in Greece Athena High School, 800 Long Pond Road. Proceeds will benefit DePaul Mental Health Services, 855 W. Main St.

Celebrities who are scheduled to participate include former Syracuse University basketball star Greg Monroe; former National Football League player and Caledonia-Mumford High School All-American Robert (Junior) Poles; and Monroe County First Assistant District At-

torney Charles Siragusa.

A raffle for an autographed Bills team ball and an autographed pennant will be held. The Bills will also sign autographs at halftime.

The event will benefit DePaul's Adolescent Program, which provides residential and counseling services for emotionally troubled teens and their families.

Tickets are \$4 in advance or \$5 at the door. Call Tom Corrigan at 716/436-8020 for information.

Annual 'Follies' on tap at Aquinas Institute in April

ROCHESTER — Parents, faculty and alumni of Catholic schools will present this year's "Follies" at the Aquinas Institute, 1127 Dewey Ave., in April.

Entitled "Razzle Dazzle," evening performances of the musical skits will take place in the school auditorium on April 5-6 and April 12-13 at 8 p.m.

A matinee for families — including free admission for children under 12 — will be held on Sunday, April 7, at 2 p.m.

Tickets for all performances are \$6 for adults and students. Cost for senior citizens is \$5. Tickets may be purchased at the door or by calling 716/865-1411.

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