

Visiting parishes offers varied experiences

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

Father Thomas Erdle is one of the most gifted priests in our diocese. He was the first diocesan priest to become an expert in sign language. In addition to religion, he is also knowledgeable in several languages, history and the practical arts.

After peering into his garage recently, I was amused to see such things as golf clubs, skates, a tennis racket, skis and a pair of wooden crutches. Some time ago he invited me to assist at his parish, St. Mark's in Greece, from Sept. 20 to Oct. 6. This was a happy invitation since I had assisted there several times, dating back to when Father Joseph Donovan served as pastor. Father Donovan is now assistant chaplain at the Sisters of St. Joseph Convent Infirmary in Rochester.

My experiences serving at parishes in suburban Rochester are different than when I visit small villages such as Lyons, Clyde or even Auburn and Corning. When I assist at churches in small villages, I can go down town and meet dozens of parishioners. The suburbia charge attend Sunday and weekday Masses; show an interest in the religious-education program and the school if there is one; hold such meetings

as the Men's Club and the Altar and Rosary Society; and, of course, offer weekly Bingo games.

To deprive Bingo fans of their recreation is an act of cruelty. For hundreds of people, Bingo offers as much fun and recreation as football does for Buffalo Bills fans.

Since I had lots of free time at St. Mark's, I decided to mend fences while in Rochester. I called on a few priest-friends I haven't seen much since leaving Webster three years ago. Visits with our priests are always edifying. I nearly always leave with something helpful for our apostolate.

My first stop of the week was at Holy Rosary Church, where Fathers Robert A. Meng, Robert A. Klee, and the venerable Monsignor Emmett Murphy — who lives in residence — welcomed me. We were joined by Fathers L. James Callan and James Collins of Elmira. They are regular visitors on Mondays. Father John Morgan, who will soon travel to Myrtle Beach for the winter, also joined us.

Most priests are busy men and have lots of work to do, so I usually visit at meal time. Then their work is not interrupted by a wandering cleric. Priests need companionship.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

I moved on to Holy Spirit in Webster for supper with Fathers Fred Bush, Ron Antinorelli, and Francis Feeney. (Father Feeney is very active even though he is "retired.") The parish bulletin reported that the Diocese of Rochester and the Knights of Columbus are teaming up to get Mother Angelica's "Eternal Word Television Network" for cable TV viewers in Rochester. This was attempted in Auburn and flopped.

Viewers in Geneva — and as far away as Lyons and Canandaigua — can watch EWTN on cable. EWTN reaches 15,000,000 people in the United States each day. Rochester would be a valuable addition. I wonder if Catholics in the Rochester area are eager to get EWTN available through their cable company.

Father Raymond G. Heisel of Our

Mother of Sorrows Church invited me for a mid-week supper. We were joined by Father Dave Faraone and Brian Cool, a seminarian from Auburn. He is studying at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore. When I left, Father Heisel loaned me the book, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church determines who becomes a saint, who doesn't, and why.* (Simon and Schuster, 1990). The book was written by Kenneth Woodward, who served as the religion editor at *Newsweek* for 26 years.

The book offers vignettes by dozens of people, including Terence Cardinal Cooke, Dorothy Day and Archbishop Oscar Romero. The book also tells of mystics, visionaries and stigmatics such as Padre Pio, Therese Musco, Mother Corneila Connelly, Cardinal John Newman, Edith Stein and so many others.

I was especially impressed by the meticulousness and reticence of the postulators. Curious among the causes are of Pius XII and John XXIII. Though both might pass muster in the declaration of sainthood, the theological climate today is such that the cause of John XIII might offend many conservatives. The cause of Pius XXI might upset many liberals. Hence no hurry to declare a conclusion.

Moses, Aaron reveal God's promise to the Hebrews

By Cindy Bassett
Courier columnist

It was so quiet in the great assembly hall that Moses thought the leaders of the Israelites could hear his teeth chattering. Even now as he heard his brother, Aaron, repeating the story of what had happened on the mountain, it was difficult for him to believe. What would their reaction be to having him as their leader?

When Aaron had finished speaking, not one sound came from the audience. So he turned to Moses and said, "Do you have anything to add, brother?"

"Aaron, tell them that I am going to show them the signs given by God to me so they will believe," Moses said.

As soon as Aaron had done so, Moses walked forward and faced the crowd. Without uttering a word, he took his shepherd's staff and threw it on the ground.

"Look! It moves! His staff is alive!" someone cried.

"Moses' staff crawls on the ground like a snake!" another person shouted.

With that, Moses picked up the creature by the tail and it became his staff once more. The shocked audience was still recovering from the first drama when Moses put his hand into his coat, as the Lord had instructed him to do on the mountain.

THE BIBLE CORNER

When he brought the snake back out, it was white with the disease of leprosy. As the audience continued to watch, he put his hand in a second time and it was healed.

The audience was no longer silent. "There is one more sign to be given," Aaron said, calling the crowd to order again. He pointed to the urn his brother held before them.

"Ordinary river water from the Nile," Aaron said, "becomes blood when poured out on the ground."

As the audience gasped, Aaron turned back to his brother and said, "Now there will be no doubt that it is God's will that you lead his people to freedom."

"Look," Moses said, pointing to one of the elders in the audience who had come forward to speak. "Now we will see."

"Our people have been the slaves of Pharaoh for 400 years. Why is the Lord doing this for us after all of this time?" the

elder asked.

Moses finally replied, "You have suffered much under this Pharaoh. And all of this time, the Lord has never left you. He has heard your cry for help. So now he will give you a land all of your own."

After that statement, the entire assembly bowed their heads in thanksgiving and worship. When they had finished praying, Moses and Aaron went to see Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's first response to the two brothers was uncontrollable laughter. Soon he was joined by his staff in ridiculing Moses and Aaron. When he finally stopped, he asked them, "Who is this God of yours that you come here with such a request? I do not know him nor have I ever heard of him."

"If you refuse us," Aaron replied, "you will know our God by the punishments which he will bring down on your people."

"How dare you come here and threaten me!" Pharaoh shouted. "Not only will I not let these Hebrews leave, but they will be given more work than before! The problem is laziness. That is why their heads are filled with ridiculous ideas of freedom!"

That same day, Pharaoh issued an order to his supervisors. "You are no longer to provide straw for these slaves to make

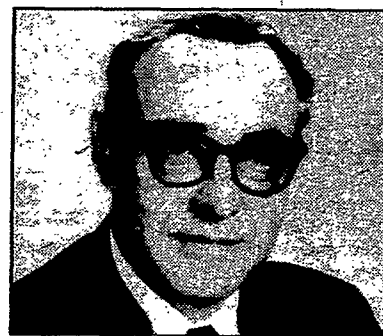
their bricks. Let them gather their own straw. But their daily quota for bricks remains the same."

A greater cry of anguish than ever before went up from the Hebrews. When the elders learned of Pharaoh's order, they went to Moses and Aaron. "You promised us freedom. But our lives have become even worse since you came here!"

Moses went off by himself to pray. "Why, God? You have not rescued your people. What happened to your promise?"

When Moses was finally silent, he heard the Lord speaking to him: "No, I have not forgotten my promise. My people will be given their own land. But first, Pharaoh and everyone else will know who I am."

Scripture Reference: Exodus, Chapters 4-6:8.



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