

Find the right point of view

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 15:1-3, 11-32; (R1) Josue 5:9-12; (R2) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

The parable of the prodigal son is really three parables in one: the prodigal son, the elder brother, and the forgiving father.

I think we should focus on the elder brother, because he provides a good picture of so many of us. He sees things from the human viewpoint, not from God's point of view.

Of course the elder brother has a case — from the human viewpoint. His brother extracted his inheritance prematurely from his father and blew it in short order. Then he came crawling back home and was treated like a returning astronaut.

The elder brother is in the field working. He hears music and festive sounds coming from the house. Inquiring of a household slave, he learns of his brother's return and becomes angry. He demands an explanation from his father.

"For years now I have slaved for you ... yet you never gave me so much as a kid goat to celebrate with my friends." Yet for his younger brother, whom he accuses of infidelity and immorality, the fatted calf is killed. Not only did he squander his own inheritance, but now he is cutting in to his brother's share.

The elder brother has a pretty sound case for unfairness — from the human viewpoint.

But God the Father doesn't deal with us that way. My thoughts are not your thoughts and my ways are not your ways. As Jesus said, "He makes His sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and unjust."

The elder brother was like the Pharisees, judging and condemning misbehavior. It is sad the sheep can get lost simply by nibbling away at the grass and never looking up. That can be true of us. Like the elder brother, we can focus so much on what people do that we fail to see what people are. We can get so engrossed in self that we forget to

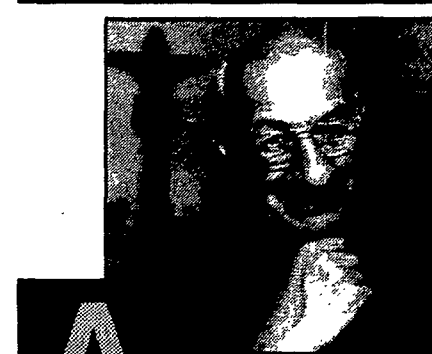
see things as God does.

If ever you go to Copenhagen, you will undoubtedly visit "The Little Mermaid," Denmark's most famous sculpture. She was made in 1913 by the sculptor Edvard Eriksen. An American artist traveled all the way to Denmark to see the classic statue. A disappointed look came over his face when he saw the work. A little boy standing nearby asked him what was wrong.

"Don't you like it?" He replied that he didn't. "Well," said the boy, "you are not looking at it the right way. You must come closer, kneel down, and then look up."

The artist willingly followed each step. He drew near the maiden's figure sitting on a rock and looking out into the harbor. Then he got down on his knees and looked up. From this new perspective, he could see the glory of the sculpted face.

If only we were not so egotistical and selfish, so petty and uncharitable, so lacking in humility, in pity and compassion and the desire to serve. A person of this type may



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

"succeed" in business, but fail in nearly everything else. He or she may notably fail to make a good home to contribute to the good of the community, even to enter into God's kingdom.

Significantly at the parable's end, the elder brother is outside the house, nursing his wounded ego.

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BINGO TIMES & LOCATIONS

<p>Bishop Kearney 125 Kings Hwy. S. 671-1065 Wed. 8p.m.</p> <p>Good Shepherd 3288 E. Henrietta Rd. 334-3518 Sat. 7:30pm</p> <p>Guardian Angels Church 2061 E. Henrietta Rd. 334-1412 Wed. 7:30pm</p> <p>Holy Apostles 6 Austin St. 254-7170 Mon., Tues. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>Holy Family Church 899 Jay Street 328-3110 Sun. 7:30pm</p> <p>Holy Family Home School Assoc. 899 Jay St. 328-4800 Wed. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>Holy Ghost 220 Coldwater Rd. 247-3535 Fri. 8p.m.</p> <p>Most Precious Blood 179 Stenson St. 458-6079 Fri. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>Our Lady of Mercy 600 Denise Rd. 865-0775 Tue. 7:30pm</p> <p>Our Lady of Perpetual Help 923 Portland Ave. 467-2725 Wed. 7:30pm</p> <p>St. Anne 1600 Mt. Hope Ave. 271-3260 Thur. 7:30pm</p> <p>St. Boniface 15 Whalin St. 271-1468 Sun. 7:45p.m.</p>	<p>St. Cecilia's 2732 Culver Rd. 467-4286 Fri. 8p.m.</p> <p>St. Charles Borromeo 64 Maiden Lane 663-3230 Mon. 8p.m.</p> <p>St. Francis Xavier 316 Bay St. 482-3211 Tues. 8p.m.</p> <p>St. James 119 Brockley Rd. 482-9796 Thur. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>St. Mark's 54 Kuhn Rd. 225-3710 Fri. 8p.m.</p> <p>St. Mary Lyceum Hall, Auburn 315-252-9545 Mon. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>St. Mary Our Mother 811 Westlake St., Horseheads 607-739-3818 Thur. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>St. Michael's 869 Clinton Ave. N. 325-4040 Thur. 7:30 & 9pm</p> <p>St. Rita's 1008 Maple Dr. 671-1100 Sun. 7:30pm</p> <p>St. Stanislaus 1150 Hudson Ave. 467-1472 Sun. 6:15p.m., Tues. 7pm & Thur. 8pm</p> <p>St. Theodore 170 Spencerport Rd. 429-6811 Sun. 7:30p.m.</p> <p>St. Thomas The Apostle 41 Colebrook Dr. 342-2323 Sat. 8p.m.</p>
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