

Christ nourishes life and love

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 9:11-17; (R1) Genesis 14:18-20; (R2) 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Sunday we celebrate the beautiful feast of Corpus Christi, the body of Christ. This feast was due primarily to one woman, St. Juliana of Mt. Cornillon (1192-1258 A.D.). Orphaned when she was five, Juliana was put under the care of the Augustinian sisters of Mt. Cornillon.

From the time she was about 16, she was haunted day and night by the appearance of a bright moon streaked with a dark band. At first, she thought this was some device the devil was using to distract her from her prayers.

At last, however, she had a vision in which our Lord explained that the moon was the Christian year with its round of festivals and that the black band denoted the absence of one festival needed to complete the cycle — a feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

Juliana became a sister at Mt. Cornillon after years passed. She was elected prioress in 1225. She began consulting theologians about the property of such a feast in honor

of the Blessed Sacrament.

James Pantaleon espoused her cause, but Juliana suffered persecution and rejection for promoting "a feast nobody wanted." After her death, Pantaleon became Pope Urban IV. He authorized the feast and commissioned St. Thomas Aquinas to compose the liturgy.

St. Thomas produced "an immortal masterpiece in which poetry, piety and faith vie for the palm." We all are familiar with some of his poetical and theological gems: *O Salutaris Hostia* and *Tantum ergo, Panis Angelicus*, and *Pange lingua*.

In his sublime hymn, *Adoro Te devote*, Thomas zeroed in to the Eucharist's key: faith. He wrote: "Sight, touch and taste in Thee are each deceived, / The ear alone most safely is believed. / I believe all the Son of God has spoken. / Than Truth's own word there is no truer token."

In a word, Thomas believed that the body of Christ is truly present in the consecrated host at Mass simply because Jesus, the Son of God, said so. The words of the Word of God were enough for him.

The Council of Vienne confirmed the feast's celebration in 1312, and it has been observed throughout the

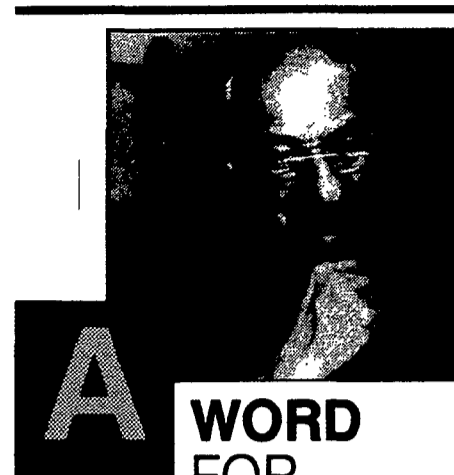
Western church ever since.

One of the great eucharistic miracles is that of Lanciano, a small Italian town situated near the Adriatic coast. The town is located halfway between San Giovanni Rotondo and Loreto. Its name means "the lance," because the centurion St. Longinus who pierced our Lord was supposed to have come from there.

Longinus, who had poor eyesight, regained total vision when he touched his eyes with the water and blood from the side of Christ. He was converted, left the army, and was martyred in Cappadocia. We celebrate his feast on March 15 and his statue is one of the four surrounding the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica.

In the 8th century, a priest doubted the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During the consecration of the Mass, the host changed into real flesh and the wine into real blood. The flesh and the blood have remained incorrupt since the 8th century; the flesh is heart tissue.

The host-flesh and the wine-blood are preserved in the beautiful reliquary kept in the church of St. Longinus in Lanciano. Last year I had the privilege to celebrate Mass at the altar of the miracle.



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

Why is Christ present in the Eucharist? Not just to be adored. He is present there for the same reason He became bodily present on Earth 2,000 years ago; namely, to nourish life and love.

To nourish life, He offers us divine food — "Take and eat." The Cure of Ars called the tabernacle "the pantry." To nourish love, He offers us Himself — "This is my body" — the body of Love incarnate.

Sins against the Ninth Commandment

By Gregory F. Augustine Pierce
Syndicated columnist

Two workplace issues are very important and current regarding the Ninth Commandment, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife."

The first is sexual harassment. No matter who you believed during the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings on television last year, it is clear from the reaction of millions of women that sexual harassment at work is occurring too many times to be ignored.

Such activity, primarily on the part of men but occasionally by women as well, is a sin against the Ninth Commandment's spirit — if not always the letter.

While the person being coveted may not always be someone's wife, she (or he) is being violated by the sexual desires of the harasser. Such covetousness destroys the object-

ivity and trust that is the very basis of good relationships at work. If one person is thinking about the other as a sex object rather than as a colleague, then trust, respect, dignity and working together become impossible.

The second workplace issue is the use of sex to sell. A current example is the "Swedish bikini team" that one beer company is using to hype its product. This was actually designed to be a "parody" of the use of sex in "other" beer commercials, but such parody proved to be impossible. The parody was received in the marketplace as just another successful use of sex to sell booze.

Sex is being used to sell all kinds of products, from automobiles to jeans. It is also being used to sell the "content" of television shows, movies and even books. (Just check out the covers on many "serious" books today or what movie parts are

shown in trailers and advertisements.)

Closely related to the use of sex to sell is the use of horror to sell. And, of course, sex and horror are often combined to sell big.

As a parent of little children, I am appalled by the constant assault on the Ninth Commandment. I can't even watch a Chicago Cubs baseball game with my kids — which is usually painful enough in itself — without worrying about the sleazy ads between innings for movies that are going to be carried later on the station.

I am not a puritan and enjoy a good, "sexy" story as much as anyone, but I do believe that as a society we have gone over the line and are in fact breaking the Ninth Commandment with much that is going on.

Shouldn't Christians in the workplace be known not as prudes but as



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people who are comfortable with our sexual identities and willing to draw the line between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate sexual behavior in the public arena?

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