

Hospitality is the way of the Lord

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

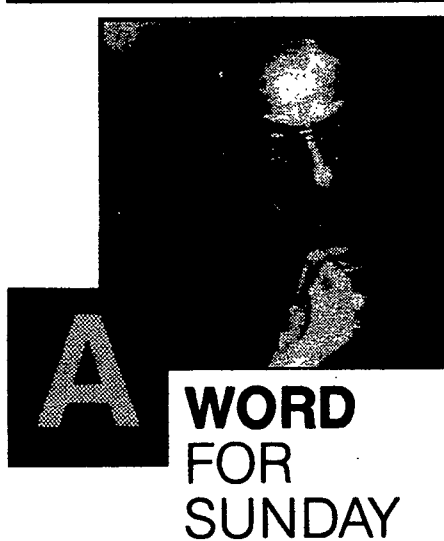
Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 10:38-42; (R1) Genesis 18:1-10; (R2) Colossians 1:24-28.

Whatever happened to hospitality? I remember mama cooking meals for a houseful of guests, making beds for them, welcoming them, and never complaining. Yet today, so many feel like Ben Franklin, who said, "Guests are like fish; after three days, they stink."

Hospitality is a virtue, a form of brotherly love, beginning at home. Sometimes, it is called good breeding, politeness or etiquette. Hospitality means to receive visitors graciously to our homes, our community and our country.

Once hospitality was such a great American virtue that Emma Lazarus wrote on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore; Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me; I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

Sunday's readings present two beautiful scenes of hospitality: one in a tent, one in a home. Abraham was certainly "a host with the



most" when you consider the quantity and quality of food he served to three travelers — at the siesta time of day, no less.

For his kindness and courtesy, God promised the aging hostess, Sara, Abraham's wife, an heir the following year.

Jesus surely appreciated Lazarus' hospitality and that of his sisters, Mary and Martha. He who had no place whereon to lay his head could at times rest it at this trio's home and enjoy Martha's cooking and concern while Mary enjoyed His conversation and company.

During the Middle Ages, bishops were obliged by church law to practice hospitality. Thus, they added to their homes the *xenodochium* — a hostel offering food and shelter to strangers, pilgrims, the poor, orphans and widows.

"Hospital" was simply a house of hospitality for the ailing or injured tourists and visitors. Until recently, monasteries and religious houses were always built with a large number of guest rooms.

It is amusing today to hear some imply that renewal in the church is the discovery of her social mission, as though such a mission had been completely neglected in the past. In July alone we celebrate the feast of three great social apostles: St. Vincent de Paul (Catholic charities); St. Camillus de Lellis (hospitals); and St. Jerome Emilian (orphanages).

Christ's example and his teaching were the root from which sprang a hospitality to others that neither pagan humanism nor benevolent Buddhism has ever achieved.

A traveler said, "I've been around the world and I have never seen atheists or agnostics build hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the destitute, like those of the Catholic Church and a Teresa of

Calcutta."

Speaking of hospitality, let us dwell a moment on the word "host," because it occurs often in the Mass. The word "host" comes from two Latin words: *hospitare* (to receive as a guest) and *hostis* (an enemy). Thus at Mass the word has a double meaning.

During Holy Communion, Christ is our "Host." He receives us to feed and nourish us. At the consecration, Christ is our "Host," the Victim who offers himself to our enemies for our salvation.

In the time of judges, the concept of the "holy war" was prevalent. The Lord was regarded as the "Lord of hosts," Lord of the armies of His people. David retorted to the taunts of Goliath: "I come against you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the Lord of the armies of Israel" (1 Sm. 17:45).

A trace of this imagery remains in the Mass when we say, "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might."

I saw this sign in a rectory I visited once: *Hospes venit, Christus venit*, which translates "A guest comes, Christ comes." Sara served three visitors and Martha served Christ — both were serving God.

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July 18 to 26, 1992 Nightly at 7:30pm

1992 Theme: "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me"
Guest Preacher: Fr. Matthew Swizdor, OFM Conv

Saturday, July 18 "Rosary Tableau"

John 1:1-5, 9-14 (16)

Sunday, July 19 "Holy Spirit in the Scriptures"

Ezekiel 37:1-14 (63)

Monday, July 20 "Holy Spirit in the Scriptures"

Luke 4:16-21 (39)

Tuesday, July 21 "Gifts & Fruits of the Spirit"

1 Cor 12:3-7, 12-13 (64)

Wednesday, July 22 "Personal Conversion"

Romans 5:1-5 (167)

Thursday, July 23 "Sin as Taught in the Bible"

Romans 8:22-27 (63)

Friday, July 24 "Signs of the Times"

Revelation 12:1-17 (647)

Saturday, July 25 "Sacrament of Reconciliation"

John 20:19-23 (64)

Sunday, July 26 11:30 a.m. Solemn Eucharist for

the Feast of Joachim & Anne

Luke 11:1-13 (112)

Services on Sunday through Friday consist of Evening Prayer, Sermon and Novena Prayers.



Saint Anne



Matthew Swizdor is a native of the Auburn, New York area and is a member of the Conventual Franciscans. He studied philosophy and theology in Montreal, Canada and was ordained to the priesthood in June 1943. Father Matthew is the author of three books: *God in Me* (1953), *Lay Hands on the Sick* (1983) and *The Power of the Kingdom*, his latest book. At the present time, he is engaged full time in the ministry of preaching and healing.

SAINT ANNE CHURCH
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The Public is cordially invited. The Church building is air-conditioned.