

Gain peace by wiping away sins

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 24:35-48; (R1) Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; (R2) 1 John 2:1-5.

There are seven Sundays between Easter and Pentecost.

The Gospels for Easter and the two succeeding Sundays were selected to prove the reality of Christ's resurrection.

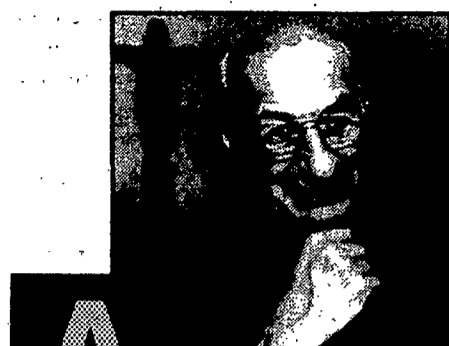
The fourth Sunday: "I'm the Good Shepherd;" that was why He laid down His life.

The fifth Sunday: "I'm the true vine; therefore cling to Me."

The sixth and seventh Sundays prepare us for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who pours love into our hearts and truth into our minds and strengthens us in our conflict with the evil one.

On this third Sunday of Easter, Luke describes Jesus' appearance just before His Ascension. He had an apologetic purpose in mind. Some people in his day were saying that Jesus did not rise from the dead; that all the apostles saw was a ghost.

To prove the reality of His resur-



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

rection, Jesus appealed to all five senses of His apostles.

To their sense of hearing: "He said, 'Peace to you.'"

To their sense of seeing: "'Look at my hands and my feet; it is really I.'"

To their tactile sense: "Touch me, and see that a ghost does not have flesh and bones as I do."

To their smell and taste: "'Have you

anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of cooked fish, which he took and ate in their presence."

These fishermen were used to the outdoor life, to the open sea, to hard manual labor, their five senses had never been dulled by overindulgence in food or drink or idleness. They were not daydreamers or visionaries, yet Jesus convinced them, the hardest of people to convince, that He was no ghost.

And then to convince them intellectually, Jesus opened their minds to the understanding of Scriptures. One might think that Jesus being God's Word might have taught without using the Scriptures — but He did not. He used it, because He wanted the apostles and us to use it. And He wanted it to be used prayerfully, for He alone can open the mind to understanding it.

After having fully convinced the apostles in body and in mind that He was risen, He commissioned them to preach not only His resurrection, but that the resurrection of sinners is now possible by their preaching "penance for the remission of sins."

Peter does exactly that in the first reading. Speaking to those who had murdered Jesus, he said: "Reform your lives! Turn to God, that your sins may be wiped away!"

The Easter message is peace. The Easter sacrament is the sacrament of peace, the sacrament of reconciliation: peace through wiping away sins.

Last Sunday's Gospel told of the institution of the sacrament of reconciliation. In her diary, Blessed Mary Faustina Kowalska said Our Lord asked the church to designate that Sunday as Mercy Sunday. He said that the sacrament of Mercy is the sacrament of reconciliation. Mercy is love stooping down to lift up. Sin casts us down into the mud, Jesus picks us up through the sacrament of Mercy.

All we need do is avail ourselves of this great mercy.

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council — with St. Francis and St. Dominic present — legislated that anyone in mortal sin is bound to go to confession before Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost. "... is bound" — this is a grave obligation. This is called the Easter Duty. The time for it is now.

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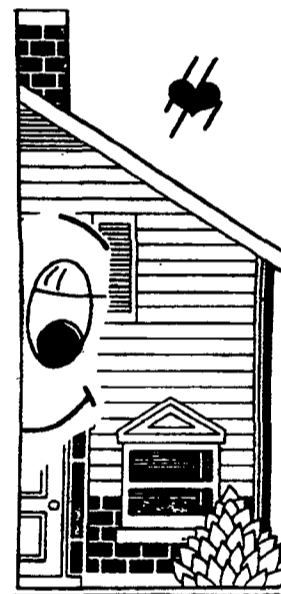
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