

COLUMNISTS

Gratitude is needed for spiritual health

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

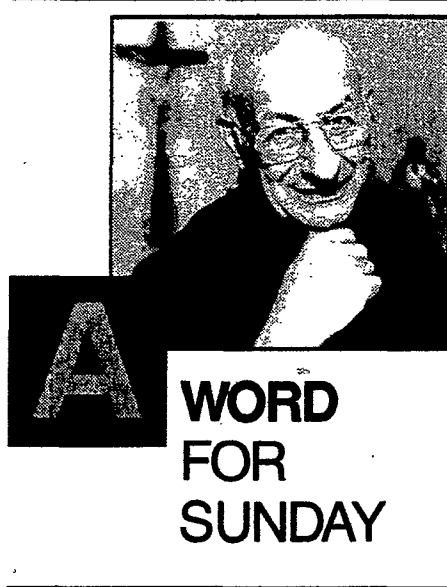
Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 17:11-19; (R1) 2 Kings 5:14-17; (R2) 2 Timothy 2:8-13.

Gratitude is the theme of Sunday's readings. A girl in science class was asked, "What is salt?" She answered, "Salt is what spoils the potatoes when you leave it out." We might ask, "What is gratitude?" Like the girl, we might answer, "Gratitude is what spoils life when you leave it out."

Sunday's first and third readings tell of the cure of lepers. One is a proud, powerful general, Naaman; the others are poor nameless beggars. All sought cures: the general from a man of God, Elisha; the 10 from the Son of God, Jesus. All are cured because of their faith. But only two are remembered: the general and the Samaritan, because of their gratitude.

Judging from the gospel, nine out of 10 people never say "thank you" for favors received. Sometimes the ratio is even higher.

On the night of Sept. 8, 1860, an excursion ship collided with a lumber freighter on Lake Michigan. It began to sink off shore about three miles from the Methodist seminary at Northwestern University. Ed Spencer, a



seminarian, jumped out of bed, dressed, and raced to the scene of the collision.

Ed was a strong swimmer. That night, he made 15 trips to the wreckage and brought in 15 people. As light dawned and Ed was resting, drinking a cup of coffee, someone shouted, "There are two more out there." Despite his exhausted condition, Ed plunged into the surf again, barely made it to a piece of the wreckage onto which a man and a woman were clinging for dear life. He brought them in and collapsed on the shore. Two hundred eighty-seven people

Daily Readings

Monday, Oct. 16
Rom 1:1-7; Lk 11:29-32
Tuesday, Oct. 17
Rom 1:16-25; Lk 11:37-41
Wednesday, Oct. 18
2 Tm 4:10-17; Lk 10:1-9
Thursday, Oct. 19
Rom 3:21-30; Lk 11:47-54
Friday, Oct. 20
Rom 4:1-8; Lk 12:1-7
Saturday, Oct. 21
Rom 4:13, 16-18; Lk 12:8-12

drowned that night, and only 98 survived—17 of them rescued by Ed Spencer.

Ed was carried off to the hospital. The ordeal left him an invalid. Years later, when an old man, Spencer was interviewed and asked if he remembered anything particular about the rescue. Spencer replied, "Only this: Of the 17 people I saved, not one of them ever thanked me." Imagine that — not one out of 17!

There are two kinds of gratitude: negative or thankfulness for what is not; and

positive or thankfulness for what is.

We ought to have negative gratitude: We're not lepers. Chesterton said, "Children thank Santa for gifts they find in their stockings. Do they ever thank God for the two good legs they find every day in those stockings?"

Both Naaman and the Samaritan exemplified positive gratitude — thankfulness for favors received.

St. Paul once asked, "What have you that you have not received?" God gives and gives and gives and we receive and receive and receive. Unless we give thanks, we become unhealthy, no longer whole. As in breathing, there is a double rhythm of inhaling and exhaling, and to stop one or the other means death; so in life there must be a double movement of receiving and giving thanks. To receive always and never give thanks is to die spiritually.

Sometimes God permits evil and sometimes He showers us with blessings. But at all times, He is seeking our greater good. So, no matter what — in adversity as well as in prosperity — our Christian stance should always be a life-long "Thank you, God!"

Memorize this text of St. Paul: "In all circumstances give thanks for this is the will of God for you" (1 Thes 5:18). "In all circumstances," not just when things go good, but even when they go bad.

CATHOLIC COURIER CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

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for info. call Mary (716) 266-8741 or Rachel (716) 266-5398

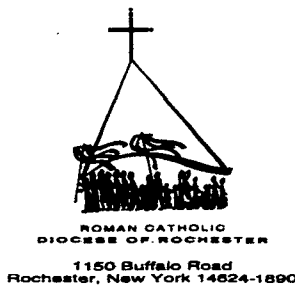
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The Diocese of Rochester, New York is in the process of selecting a pool of qualified candidates who will be considered for Pastoral Administrator openings in the 1996 spring hiring process. In this position, a lay person, religious or deacon is responsible for providing leadership in all areas of parish life for a parish in the twelve county area of our diocese.

Candidates for consideration would preferably hold a Master of Divinity, but at least a graduate degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry and preferably have successfully completed one unit of CPE. A mini-

mum of 7 years experience in a wide variety of parish/pastoral ministry preferred. 3-5 years of demonstrated successful pastoral leadership experience in a parish organization, including responsibility in managing financial and human resource areas is also required.

Special requirements include active membership in a Roman Catholic faith community, residence within the diocese and ability to relocate, if necessary, once parish locations have been determined. Salary commensurate with experience, excellent benefits. Applicants must be willing to seek this position in this spring's placement process. Interested candidates should send a resume with cover letter describing specific qualifications listed above by NOVEMBER 3rd to:

Pastoral Administrator Placement Committee
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