

COLUMNISTS

Where can we find Jesus?

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 12:20-33. (R1) Jeremiah 31:31-34. (R2) Hebrew 5:7-9.

Some Greeks attending the festival of the Passover came to Philip and said, "Sir, we should like to see Jesus."

That's the universal need of humanity, isn't it? Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. Without him there is no going, there is no knowing, there is no living. "Sir, we should like to see Jesus."

Well, where can we find Jesus? The first place is in the Gospels, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, even though they do not give a complete record of his life. As John wrote at the end of his Gospel, "There are also many other things that Jesus did, but if these were to be described individually, I do not think the whole world would contain the books that would be written."

A best-selling book recently by Laurie Beth Jones is titled *Jesus CEO*. It is a book for business executives and leaders based on the self-mastery, action and relationship skills that Jesus used to train and motivate his team, the 12 apostles.

Jones discovered that Jesus' leadership approach with his staff ran counter to most of the management styles and techniques employed today, that using his approach was the key to business success. No matter our needs, Jesus has the answer.



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

"Sir, we should like to see Jesus."

Cal Samra wrote a book titled *The Joyful Christ*. At the age of 50, Samra was hopeless. His health had failed; he had to move away from family and friends to the warm climate of Arizona. He had to leave his job. His marriage had failed. Worn out and sick, lonely and depressed, he decided to kill himself.

He got a rope and drove around in the desert looking for a tree from which to hang himself. The palm trees were too high; the cacti impossible to hang from. So he decided to drown himself. But the rivers were dried out from the heat. His luck had really run out, he couldn't even find a way to kill himself.

Finally, he decided to go to a Franciscan retreat. There, he met a warm, cheerful Franciscan, Father Gavin Griffith. Fa-

ther Griffith welcomed Cal, asked him to dinner, and kept him laughing all through the meal with his jokes and humor. On the wall of the monastery Cal saw a picture of Jesus that he had never seen before, the picture of a vigorous, joyful Jesus, titled "The Laughing Christ."

This was a warm, personable, real Jesus — the kind of man anyone would want to follow. Cal had never seen Jesus this way. It was the beginning of his emotional healing. Today Cal Samra is the head of the Fellowship of Merry Christians.

A second place to see Jesus is in the lives of people in need. Jesus said, "When you do it unto the least of these, you do it unto me." Jesus is in the least. Our youth are in great need today. We are shortchanging them in education. We are training them without the least reference to Jesus and his way and life. That is why I have started Tyburn Academy in Auburn.

Finally, we see Jesus in those who are his disciples. Gandhi once said, "If you Christians were only more like your Christ, all the world would be Christian." You have heard it said, "You are the only Bible some people will ever read." We could also say, "You are the only Jesus some people will ever meet."

Earl Palmer in his little book *The Enormous Exception* tells that he became a Chris-

tian just because a premed student helped him in his courses when he was sick.

"You know," Palmer writes, "this kind of thing just isn't done. I wanted to know what made this guy act the way he did. I wanted to go to church with him. And I found Jesus."

A small act of love led to Jesus. Do others see Jesus in me?

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isidore's Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, March 17

Deuteronomy 13:1-9, 15-17, 19-30, 33-62 or 13:41-62; John 8:1-11

Tuesday, March 18

Numbers 21:4-9; John 8:21-30

Wednesday, March 19

2 Samuel 7:4-5, 12-14, 16; Romans 4:13, 16-18, 22; Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24 or Luke 2:41-51

Thursday, March 20

Genesis 17:3-9; John 8:51-59

Friday, March 21

Jeremiah 20:10-13; John 10:31-42

Saturday, March 22

Ezekiel 37:21-28; John 11:45-57

Pope's reflections offer clues to self-understanding

For all that he is the world's most visible public figure, Pope John Paul II is a man with a deeply ingrained sense of privacy. All the more reason, then, to welcome his autobiographical reflections on his priestly vocation, *Gift and Mystery*, recently published in English by Doubleday.

Careful students of the pope's life and work will not find anything strikingly new here, by way of data. But the emphases the Holy Father places on this or that aspect of his unfolding vocational decision shed important light on his self-understanding.

Gift and Mystery includes the most extended expression of the pope's gratitude to his father that has yet been published. Recent papal biographies, most notably *His Holiness* by Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi, have indulged in a long-distance psychoanalysis of 9-year-old Karol Wojtyla and his reaction to the death of his mother, replete with speculations on how that loss shaped the future pope's convictions and spirituality.

Since a psychoanalytic setting is necessary to do psychoanalysis, the net result of the Bernstein/Politi attempt to put the pope on the couch, so to speak, is that we learn almost nothing about John Paul II, but a lot about Bernstein and Politi. And



the catholic difference

BY GEORGE WEIGEL

Karol Wojtyla, Sr., gets lost in a Freudian fog.

His son now repays a filial debt by writing movingly about his father, a retired Army officer and a "deeply religious man," to whom the pope is grateful "above all" for his religious formation. "His example," the Holy Father wrote, "was in a way my first seminary."

Gift and Mystery also underlines the crucial importance of young Wojtyla's experience of World War II in crystallizing his priestly vocation. The Nazi occupation of Poland was extraordinarily painful.

Living through the attempted destruction of the venerable Jagiellonian University and the deportation of his professors to the Sachsenhausen concentration

camp; his life as a forced laborer in a quarry and a chemical plant; the accidental death of a fellow worker in the quarry; the martyrdom of his parish priests; his experiences in helping form and lead clandestine cultural resistance groups, including the famous "Rhapsodic Theater"; his friendships in these venues and the death of his father in February 1941 — all of this had a profound impact on Karol Wojtyla's emerging decision to abandon his plans for a literary/theatrical career and to enter Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha's underground seminary.

Karol Wojtyla was ordained a priest on Nov. 1, 1946, in the private chapel of the archbishop's residence in Krakow. But even that singular experience was touched by memories of the war. As the Holy Father wrote, he recalled during his ordination another clandestine seminarian, Jerzy Zachuta, with whom he had served the archbishop's morning Mass:

"One day he did not appear. After Mass I stopped by his house ... and learned that he had been taken away by the Gestapo during the night. Immediately afterward, his name appeared on the list of Poles who were to be shot. Being ordained in that very chapel which had seen us together so many

times, I could not help but remember this brother in the priestly vocation, whom Christ had united in a different way to the mystery of his death and resurrection."

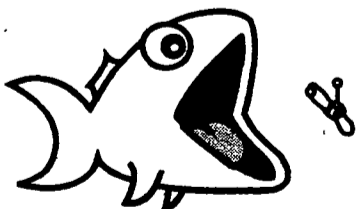
Gift and Mystery was occasioned by the celebrations this past November of the Holy Father's golden jubilee, and the book is suffused with the pope's love for the priesthood and for his fellow priests. Readers may find particularly intriguing the "Litany of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Priest and Victim," which the Holy Father includes in his book as a kind of prayer-appendix. The litany was a staple of the Krakow seminary, and is quite striking in its sense of the demands of the priestly life.

Those demands are, above all, for service. Priesthood as power is a notion utterly foreign to John Paul II's concept of holy orders. Which is to say that the pope's is a priestly heart without any tinge of clericalism. Or, as one of his closest collaborators once told him, "Holy Father, you have a priestly heart and a lay head."

The pontifical eyebrow was raised, in curiosity, but the Holy Father didn't challenge the truth of the suggestion.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Lenten Dining Guide



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