

COLUMNISTS

Blessed Sacrament is here for us

Sunday's Reading: (R3) Mark 14:12-16, 22-26. (R1) Exodus 24:3-8. (R2) Hebrews 9:11-15.

Next Sunday is the feast of Corpus Christi. The introduction of this feast was primarily due to one woman, Blessed Juliana of Mt. Cornelius, born in Liege in 1192. When 16, she was haunted day and night by the appearance of a bright moon streaked with a dark band. One night our Lord in a vision explained to her that the moon was the church year with its round of feasts and that the black band denoted the lack of one holy day to complete the cycle: a feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1225 Juliana launched a campaign for such a feast. But she suffered great persecution for her efforts and died April 5, 1258, in poverty and sickness. However, her friend who believed in her, James Panteleon, became Pope Urban IV and instituted the feast. St. Thomas composed the liturgy for the feast, containing the hymns we sing at Benediction: the "O Salutaris Hostia" and the "Tantum Ergo."

In the Middle Ages strong emphasis on the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was another reason for establishing the feast.

Today the feast is meant to emphasize the real presence of Christ in the Blessed



a word
for
sunday

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

Sacrament — "a presence which surpasses all others," Paul VI wrote in his 1965 encyclical, *Mysterium fidei* ("Mystery of the Faith"). "A presence that is called 'real' — because it is presence in the fullest sense; that is, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, the God-man, is wholly and entirely present." The pontiff went on to say that "Tirelessly must the clergy promote the worship of the Eucharist, the focus where all other forms of piety must ultimately emerge ... In the course of the day the faithful should not omit to visit the Blessed Sacrament, which according to liturgical laws must be kept in the churches with great reverence in a most honorable location."

Father Stefano Gobbi said that Mary complained to him, "Often Jesus in the Eucharist is placed in some isolated corner whereas He should be placed in the

center of the church and He should be placed at the center of your ecclesial gatherings, because the church is his temple which has been built for Him and then for you.

"What causes deep bitterness to my motherly heart is the way in which Jesus, present in the tabernacle, is treated in many churches, where He is placed in a little corner as though He were some object or other to be made use of, for your 'ecclesial gatherings' ("To the Priests Our Lady's Beloved Sons," Aug. 8, 1986, #330).

Placing the tabernacle in a prominent part of the church is a powerful symbolic statement, a statement expressing publicly that we believe that Christ and Christ alone is the center of our lives and of our church.

In the Blessed Sacrament Our Lord is waiting for us, ready to hear our prayers and give us every grace. Yet, many Catholics rarely or never visit him. They have difficulties and they have sorrows. Yet they seek help from others, who cannot give it, but not from the Lord who can give it. When on earth, he consoled and comforted all who went to him. "Come to me," he says to us.

St. Alphonsus said, "Of all the moments of your life, the time you spend before the Blessed Sacrament will give you more strength during life and more

consolation at the hour of death and during eternity."

St. Teresa of Avila heard someone say, "If only I had lived at the time of Jesus ... If only I had seen Jesus ... If only I had talked with him" She answered in her spirited way, "Don't we have the Blessed Sacrament, the living, true and real Jesus present before us? Why look for more?"

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, June 2

Tobit 1:1-2, 2:1-9; Mark 12:1-12

Tuesday, June 3

Tobit 2:9-14; Mark 12:13-17

Wednesday, June 4

Tobit 3:1-11, 16; Mark 12:18-27

Thursday, June 5

Tobit 6:11, 7:1, 9-14, 8:4-7; Mark 12:28-34

Friday, June 6

Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8-9; Ephesians 3:8-12, 14-19; John 19:31-37

Saturday, June 7

Tobit 12:1, 5-15, 20; Mark 12:38-44 or Luke 2:41-51



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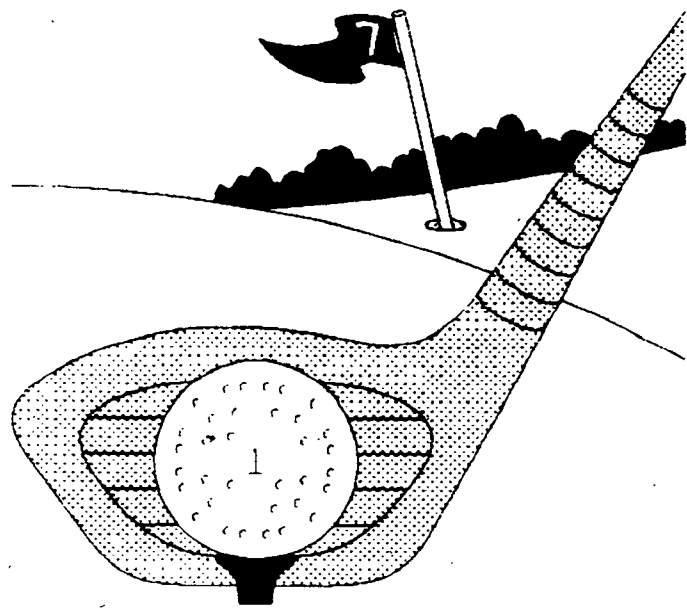
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