

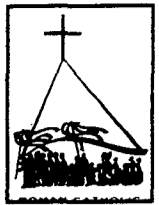
Leader of Lambs
speaks from jail
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Annunciation Parish,
where spirits soar
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Catholic Courier

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Coming Soon

Two thumbs up, Tobit, "a beautiful love story"

Robert Serenka, Rochester reviewer

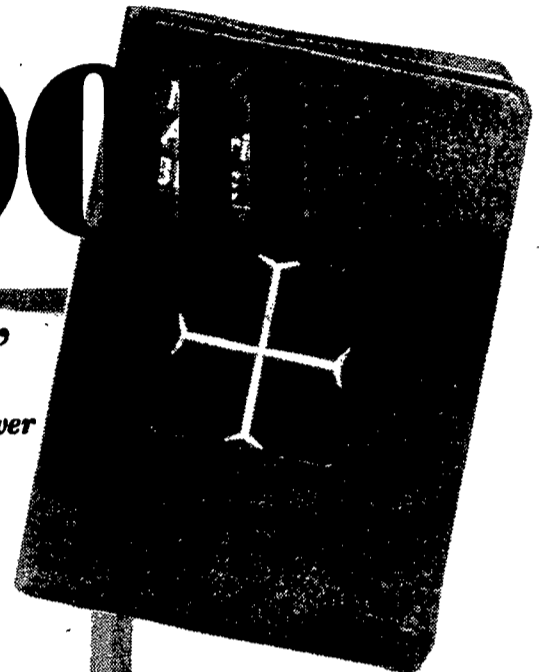
Only in Luke

Thieves rob traveler, the Good Samaritan saves stranger from death

FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HER HUSBAND AND HER PEOPLE - ESTHER

NOAH AND THE ARK RANKS RIGHT UP THERE WITH JAWS AND THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE FOR HIGH WAVE SUSPENSE!

Apostles speaking in tongues, with subtitles: Acts



Sacred book gets rave reviews

The Book of Acts is more than just an account of the church's early mission.

It makes great reading, according to Robert Serenka, a Rochester lawyer.

"It has a plot, it has characters, it has character development," said Serenka, a teacher in the Rochester Diocese's designated ministry program. "It has excitement and adventure, a shipwreck (27:6), torture and beatings (21:32, 5:40), escape (27:42). It's all in there."

He said he'll try anything to get people to read the Bible - in a way they can grasp and understand it. But he's often faced disinterest.

"It's very hard to get people to read the Gospels all the way through," the Blessed Sacrament parishioner said. "People say 'I knew this since I was a little kid.' If they'd read each (book) as an independent work, they'd be surprised what's in it and not. It was all written for different communities."

"People say, 'Yeah, I know what happened to Peter, I know what happened to Paul.'" Serenka added. "Well, maybe you do and maybe you don't."

John Halligan, chairman of St. John Fisher College's religious studies department, faces similar reactions to reading Scripture from students.

"Some students who said they read the Bible have done it for piety, for their own spiritual advancement, and haven't really read it for its own sake," he said. "They've already make their mind up about what it means. You have to tease them into being more open-minded about it."

"It is not a manual for pointing out anyone who doesn't believe

what they believe is wrong," Halligan said.

While it used to be more common to encounter Catholics who hadn't opened the Bible, such teachers as Serenka and Halligan are finding that more common today are Catholics who figure they've heard it all, thanks to Mass readings.

"Since Trent the Catholic Church had encouraged lay reading of the Bible, but it wasn't practiced very much," Halligan added. Neither were

other types of church involvement, he added.

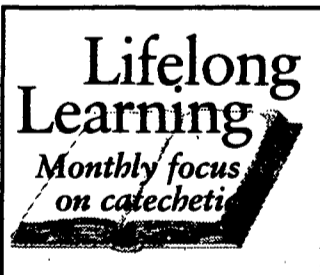
In the days before the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), parish priests or nuns often "became the final authorities on what the Bible said, whether or not they were qualified to be authorities," Halligan said.

Now with such works as the *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* and *Harper's Bible Commentary* and such multi-volume commentaries as the *Anchor Bible*, parishioners may even become more knowledgeable about Scriptures than their parish priest or nuns, he explained. The general attitude among parishioners who do read the Bible, he said, is, "That's what they know but let me see what I can find out."

The church has officially interpreted what very few - if any - passages of the Bible mean. And according to such commentators as Father Raymond E. Brown, when it does use Scripture to support its teachings, that doesn't mean it is defining the Scripture.

Vatican II followed the lead of Pope Pius XII, whose 1943 en-

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STORY BY KATHLEEN SCHWAR