

Revealing God in our lives

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time
(March 2): (R3) Mark 2:18-22; (R1)
Hosea 12:16-17, 21-22; (R2) 2
Corinthians 3:1-6:

In Sunday's Gospel, we are told that the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist fasted, whereas Jesus and his disciples did not.

Our Lord explained why he and his disciples did not fast at the time. So long as the bridegroom is with the wedding guests, they cannot fast. But when the bridegroom is away, his friends will fast. Then Jesus explained that he was bringing something new: the Old Testament brought the Law, his New Testament was to bring the Holy Spirit.

Then Jesus used two beautiful illustrations to drive home his point. You don't patch an old cloak with a new piece of cloth. If you do, when you wash the cloak, the new cloth will shrink and pull away from the old and leave a bigger tear. The same is true about wine. You don't put new wine into old wineskins, for new wine will ferment and expand and burst the old wineskins.

In the second reading, St. Paul says we are letters of Christ. Daily, by our words and actions, we communicate to those around us whether or not God lives in our hearts.

We can do this in one of three ways: by what we say, by what we do and by how we appear.

We can communicate our love of God by what we say. Are our words words of encouragement for others, words of peace, words that make a person feel better about self and about God? Our words can make a difference in a person's life. When we encourage others, we are the voice of God — living letters!

We can also communicate our love of God by what we do. In the 1950s, Charles Swindoll served in the Marine Corps and had the opportunity to visit Japan. Before the men on his



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

ship were allowed to disembark, the company commander lined them up and gave them a sober lecture. He wanted to remind them that they were walking into a totally different culture, that their customs and habits might not be welcomed in Japan. Their behavior would be closely scrutinized by the Japanese. It would be imperative to maintain good behavior because, as their commander said, "They know nothing of your homeland except what they see in you." Swindoll makes the point that as Christians it is our responsibility to represent our true homeland, the kingdom of God, here on earth. We are God's living letters. How we live validates what we believe.

Finally, we can communicate our love of God by how we appear. There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and a six pack of root beer, and started on his journey. When he had gone about three blocks, he met an old woman. He sat down next to her on a park bench. He opened his suitcase and was about to eat, when he noticed that the woman was hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. She gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. Her smile was so pretty that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Once again, she smiled at him. The boy was delight-

ed. They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, yet they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy realized how tired he was and he got up to leave. Before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old woman and gave her a hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever. When the boy got home, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her neighbor was stunned by the look of peace on her face, and she asked, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" She replied, "I ate Twinkies in the park with God." Before her neighbor responded, she added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected." Living letter straight from the heart of God!

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

Daily Readings

Monday, March 3
Sirach 17:19-27
Psalms 32:1-2, 5-7
Mark 10:17-27

Tuesday, March 4
Sirach 35:1-12
Psalms 50:5, 8, 14, 23
Mark 10:28-31

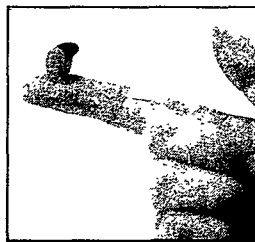
Wednesday, March 5
Joel 2:12-18
Psalms 51:3-6A, 12-14, 17, 2
Corinthians 5:20-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday, March 6
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalms 1:1-4, 6
Luke 9:22-25

Friday, March 7
Isaiah 58:1-9A
Psalms 51:3-6A, 18-19
Matthew 9:14-15

Saturday, March 8
Isaiah 58:9B-14
Psalms 86:1-6
Luke 5:27-32

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