

Seek Jesus for right reasons

18th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Aug. 3): (R3) John 6:24-35; (R1) Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15; (R2) Ephesians 4:17, 20-24.

It is a fact that not everybody who comes to Christ stays around to follow him. In the Gospel we find many people around Jesus. Some came to hear him because he was somewhat of a celebrity. Yet when they heard his message, many walked away, uninterested. Others followed him because he was a miracle worker — not because he was the Son of God.

On the day before this coming Sunday's Gospel, Jesus had fed 5,000 men besides the women and the children with five barley loaves and a couple of fish. The people were impressed. In fact they wanted to force him to be their king! But Jesus managed to slip away and to put his disciples in a boat to sail across the lake to Capernaum.

When the crowds discovered that neither Jesus nor his disciples were at the place where he had multiplied the loaves and fishes, they embarked in boats and went to Capernaum. Eventually, they caught up with Jesus. But he wasn't too happy with them. He told them point blank: "You are not looking for me because you have seen signs but because you have eaten your fill of the loaves." They wanted another free meal.

A lot of people come to Jesus for the wrong reason. Often people come to Jesus for what they can get out of him — not to praise God and to thank God for all he has already given them.

Three young girls were shopping in a trendy store. "No, no, I feel strongly about this," said one of the girls with finality. "I want to pay the bill with my mother's credit card!" Often that is our attitude toward faith. God is looked upon as an indulgent parent of whom we are continually seeking to take advantage.

Many people come to Jesus for the wrong reasons. Jesus told the crowds who wanted more handouts: "Do not work for perishable food but for food that remains unto life eternal." What we get out of our Christian faith should be a change of life. If we come to Christ for material prosperity, we come for the wrong reason. If we want that, get a subscription to *The Wall Street Journal*. If we come to Christ to get simple so-



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

lutions to complex problems, read Ann Landers or Dear Abby. Our faith must be a complete shift in orientation from me to others, from the temporal to the eternal, from my will to God's will.

Often people seek to flee responsibility rather than to take up a cross. Giving our life to Christ involves allowing him to make some real changes in our lives.

But the good news is that God gives us the power to make those changes — to perform the works of God. The people said, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" Jesus answered, "Have faith in the One he sent." But they wanted a sign, forgetting already the miracles of the loaves and fishes that had taken place the day before. Moses, they said, gave manna in the desert. They wanted him to do something like that.

Jesus, full of love, tried to correct their error. "It was not Moses," Je-

sus told them, "who gave you bread from heaven; it is my Father. He gives the bread that gives life to the world." Still, they misunderstood. They thought he was talking about bread made from yeast. So when they asked for the bread from heaven, Jesus simply told them, "I am the Bread of Life — whoever comes to me will not hunger again." In other words, Jesus told us we must set out on a journey, but that he will give us the food for that journey — the bread of life.

Many people come to Jesus, to repeat, for the wrong reasons. They want Christ to do something for them. Often they do not understand that to come to Christ has to be an act of surrender. Christ is to be sought, not for what we want, but for what he wants. Only then will we have the food and drink that will quench our hunger and thirst forever.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, August 4
Numbers 11:4B-15
Psalms 81:12-17
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday, August 5
Numbers 12:1-13
Psalms 51:1, 3-7, 12-13
Matthew 14:22-36

Wednesday, August 6
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 9
2 Peter 1:16-19
Mark 9:2-10

Thursday, August 7
Numbers 20:1-13
Psalms 95:1-2, 6-9
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday, August 8
Deuteronomy 4:32-40
Psalms 77:12-16, 21
Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday, August 9
Deuteronomy 6:4-13
Psalms 18:2-4, 47, 51
Matthew 17:14-20

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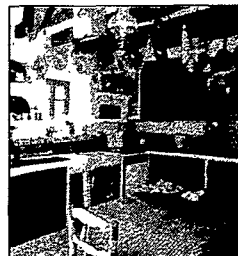
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