

Our social structure must welcome all to its breast

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 9:38-48
Sept. 29, 1991

God, I love Mark's Gospel. Here we are 10 months into the Marcan Liturgical year, when you'd expect some glimmer of understanding from Jesus' disciples, and what do we get? Questions like: "Jesus, we saw a guy casting out demons, but he wasn't one of us. Should we stop him?"

It's great! Now we can all have hope. If the early disciples were so thickheaded and coldhearted, then we, the disciples of today, have some excuse for our behaviour.

But however far our excuses might extend, they certainly can't extend as far as to harm one of the little ones. We heard about the little ones last week. Jesus makes the point again, as if we haven't really heard it.

This week Jesus says to his disciples, "If you hurt the little ones with faith, then get the Mafia in Brampton to fit you with a pair of cement shoes, and dump you in the middle of Professor's Lake." A nasty prospect! Far worse than six months at Southdown!

(In the latter part of August.

the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops released a preliminary paper dealing with the abuse of the little ones by members of the clergy. The Bishops call for "a zero tolerance level" in regard to the sexual abuse of the young. That makes some sense, but I wish the Bishops had been as graphic as Jesus was with his erring disciples.)

The point is that we haven't heard the message yet. That is one of the clearest findings of the Winter Report.

I received my copy from Mrs. Linda O'Keefe in Newfoundland last Thursday and spent an unsettling few days reading Volume One and the Volume of Conclusions and Recommendations.

Unsettling, and yet exciting, because the writers of the Report have put their fingers on both ecclesiastical and social problems at the structural level, which have led to the cases of sexual abuse of children that have been reported in the media in recent years.

Exciting, because the solution to the problem of sexual abuse is stated in terms of an ecclesiastical and a social revolution.

In respect to the Church, it was the Archdiocese of Newfoundland that sponsored and mandated the



Religion and Reality
by
Jim Ryan

Winter Commission. The Commission found that in their early public meetings the public distrusted them, convinced that they couldn't expect anything but a whitewash from a Church-appointed Commission. The Commission found however, that by the fourth meeting, they had achieved sufficient trust and credibility to prompt well-prepared submissions of considerable substance from many people in the community.

The Commission has repaid that trust by producing a document with clear and costly recommendations. The recommendations are costly because they demand fundamental changes in attitude and procedure on the part of the Church

hierarchy. Again and again, the vision of the Second Vatican Council is referred to. Again and again, the Winter Report lays the blame for the sexual abuse cases in Newfoundland on a local church which has failed to reform itself in accordance with the vision of Vatican-II.

At the social level, the Report makes some equally interesting comments: "It is significant that the problems society has tackled most successfully are those tied closely to economic structures. Those that remain, while sometimes have economic implications (particularly in the sale of pornography), primarily involve the pleasure and

gratification of men. Yet no less than attitudes toward child labour, they reflect a primitive perspective of humanity and the value and place of men, women and children within our social structures."

(The writers of the Winter Report can make such sweeping statements because the statistics suggest that unwanted sexual advances on children are widespread. The Badgley Commission reported in 1984, that in Canada, 50 per cent of females and 33 per cent of males experience unwanted sexual acts at some time in their lives, and 80 per cent of these acts occurred before the age of 21.)

New York City sojourn

By REV. THOMAS KINGSTON
St. George's Anglican Church

This summer I decided to escape the noise, pollution and racial slurs which unfortunately seem to characterize much of Ontario's cottage country these days. Instead I decided to escape to New York City. My route would take me through Upper New York State and down the shores of the Hudson on the Am-track train called rather ironically "The Maple Leaf."

Now you might wonder at my choice of New York City as an "escape." In spite of all the ads, mention of this city elicits many fearful and pessimistic comments. I was, however, not disappointed in this trip. The people I met were very friendly. On one



CLERGY COMMENT

occasion I was trying to buy tokens for the transit system. A gentleman overheard me asking a bank teller the location for purchasing fares. As I left the bank he came up to me and offered additional assistance and directions which were very helpful.

One evening I was riding the Seventh Line subway to Queen's to see the Mets play at Shea Stadium. (These days you have to go to New York to get tickets to see a professional baseball

game!) An office worker on the train, sensing my anxiety about where to get off the train, volunteered the name of the station for Shea Stadium.

The music and theatres were excellent. They were not better than what I have experienced at Stratford or in Toronto. It was, however, refreshing to be at the Lincoln Centre to see a play and to hear some music. There was a special festival in progress entitled "Mostly Mozart" in celebration of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. I was fortunate to be present while the New York Philharmonic played Mozart's Mass in C Minor. The text of the "Ordinary of the Mass" which includes the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus and Benedictus was performed brilliantly by the singers and musicians.

Sadly, while I was in New York, the TV news reported a tragic racial incident in a mixed community of black people and Jewish people. A little black boy was killed in a traffic accident and a little black girl was seriously injured. The driver of the car which killed the child was a Jewish man. A riot involving a few hundred people ensued, during which a Jewish man was stabbed to death. The mayor of New York City appeared on television appealing for calm. In stark contrast a photography exhibition at one of the New York museums depicted the life of New York gypsies during the thirties and forties with the commentary reiterating the American dream that New York is a place where people can come and live in a community free of harassment or persecution.

As a result of this short four day trip to New York City, I experienced a new energy. I gained a new appreciation for cities, their hopes and struggles, and for the Christian faith which began in the cities of Asia Minor, in Corinth and in Ephesus. The biblical story of salvation began in a garden but reaches its fulfillment in a city. The Christian vision for the human race is a city of light where people of every language, race and nation are gathered around the table of the Lord.

The next time that I am seeking some renewal, I will not hesitate to go to the Georgetown Via Rail station and take the train to another city, say Chicago or Montreal. As the contemporary hymn writer, Frederick Herman Kaan, has written, "Sing we of the modern city, scene alike of joy and stress."

Bible Digest

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5.

Are you seeking for answers? Pray about it. The Lord will give you the wisdom you need. He loves you.

"Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." Proverbs 28:14.

Blessing comes to those who fear and respect the Lord. Trouble comes to those who don't. The choice is ours to make.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

Sin is a terrible curse, but don't forget the gift of God who came to save us from sin and its consequences. Put your trust in Jesus.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psalm 8:3-4.

Rejoice in the fact that our great God not only knows you but loves you too. What a mighty God we serve.

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." Proverbs 18:22.

Husband, when was the last time you told your wife how much you love and appreciate her? She is surely one of the treasures of your life.

"And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." 1 Chronicles 7:22.

Is there someone you know that has a heavy heart? Time time to comfort and encourage them.

"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee." Psalm 5:4.

Yes, God is love, but He cannot tolerate evil. Live a life that is pleasing to God.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Wherever a Christian goes, the Holy Spirit goes with him. Christians are the dwelling place of God. Honor the Lord and all that you do. Remember, you are the temple of God.

"Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building." Ezra 4:4.

Don't let the nay-sayers keep you from doing the work of the Lord. That's just Satan's way of trying to discourage you. Be faithful in well doing for in due season you will reap.



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