

# cartoons catholic

mirth and meditation

from the brush and brain of jean charlot with commentary by f. j. sheed





OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, INC.  
HUNTINGTON, INDIANA 46750

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Most of the cartoons used in this book originally appeared in *The Catholic Bulletin*, official publication of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Diocese of New Ulm, Minnesota.

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ISBN: 0-87973-826-X

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 78-62242

Published, printed, and bound in the U.S.A. by  
Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.  
Noll Plaza  
Huntington, Indiana 46750

826



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and Day of Judgment

COMMENTATOR'S NOTE:

For twenty years or so Charlot made drawings to illustrate articles I wrote for *The Trumpet*. Invariably he found meanings in my writing that I wished I had thought of myself. Now it's the other way round — he has made the pictures, and I have to utter them in words.

The same disproportion is still there. He draws epigrams. I have to say in a hundred words what he says with a few strokes.

Be sure to find your own interpretation of the pictures before you look at mine.

F.J.S.



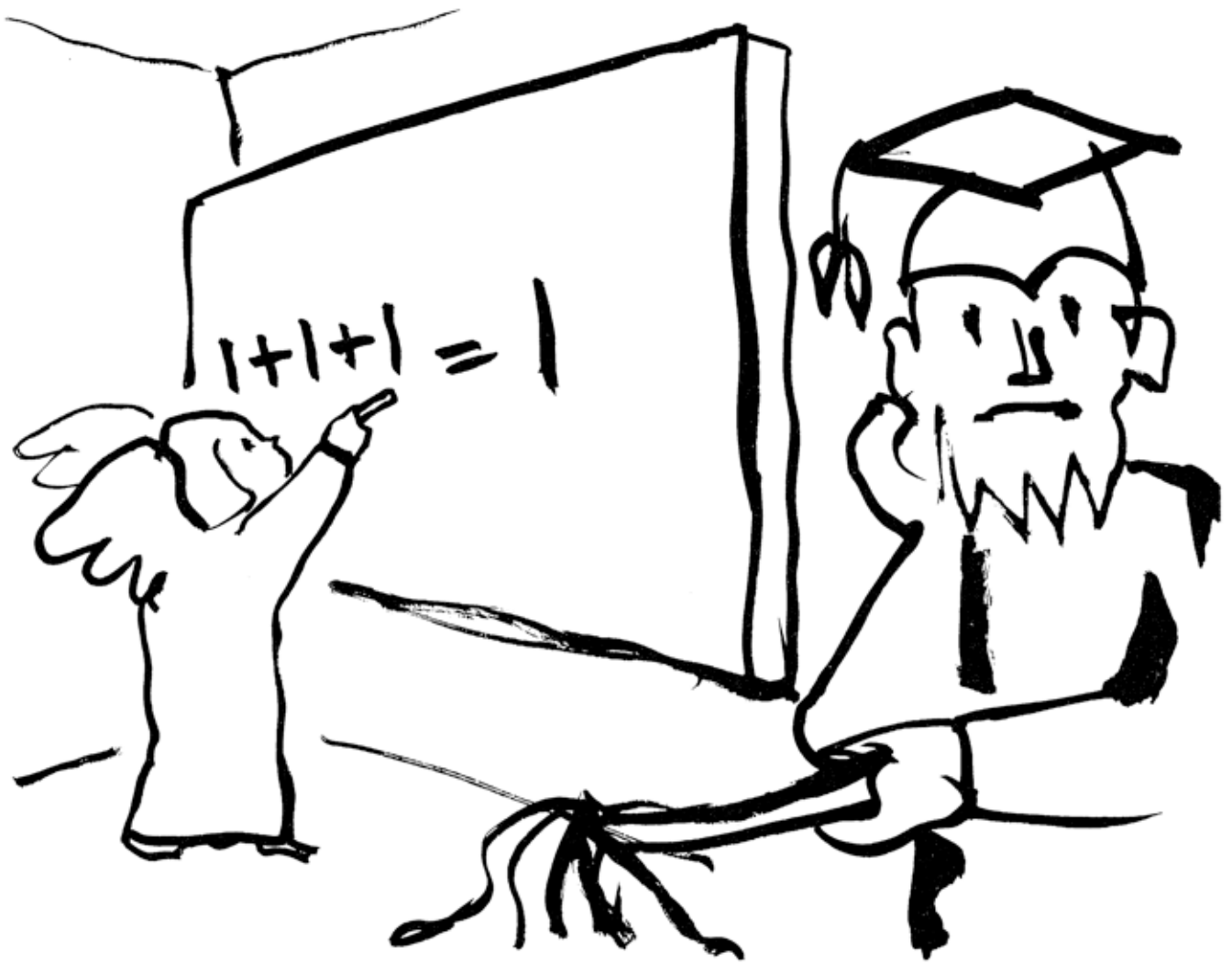
SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Holy Trinity Sunday: When teachers go to school.*

TEACHER: *"The new mathematics, I presume!"*

1

*Holy Trinity Sunday.* So there you have the Trinity: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God — yet there is but one God. ■ My first thought was that I recognized the teacher — an extremely modern theologian who said, "I am not interested in the mathematical aspects of the deity." But that was fifty years ago, so it couldn't be Charlot's man. ■ The teacher would like to beat the angel for bad arithmetic. The angel should beat the teacher for bad theology. With the doctrine of One God in Three Persons, arithmetic has nothing to do — the meaning depends not on the two numbers but on the two nouns.



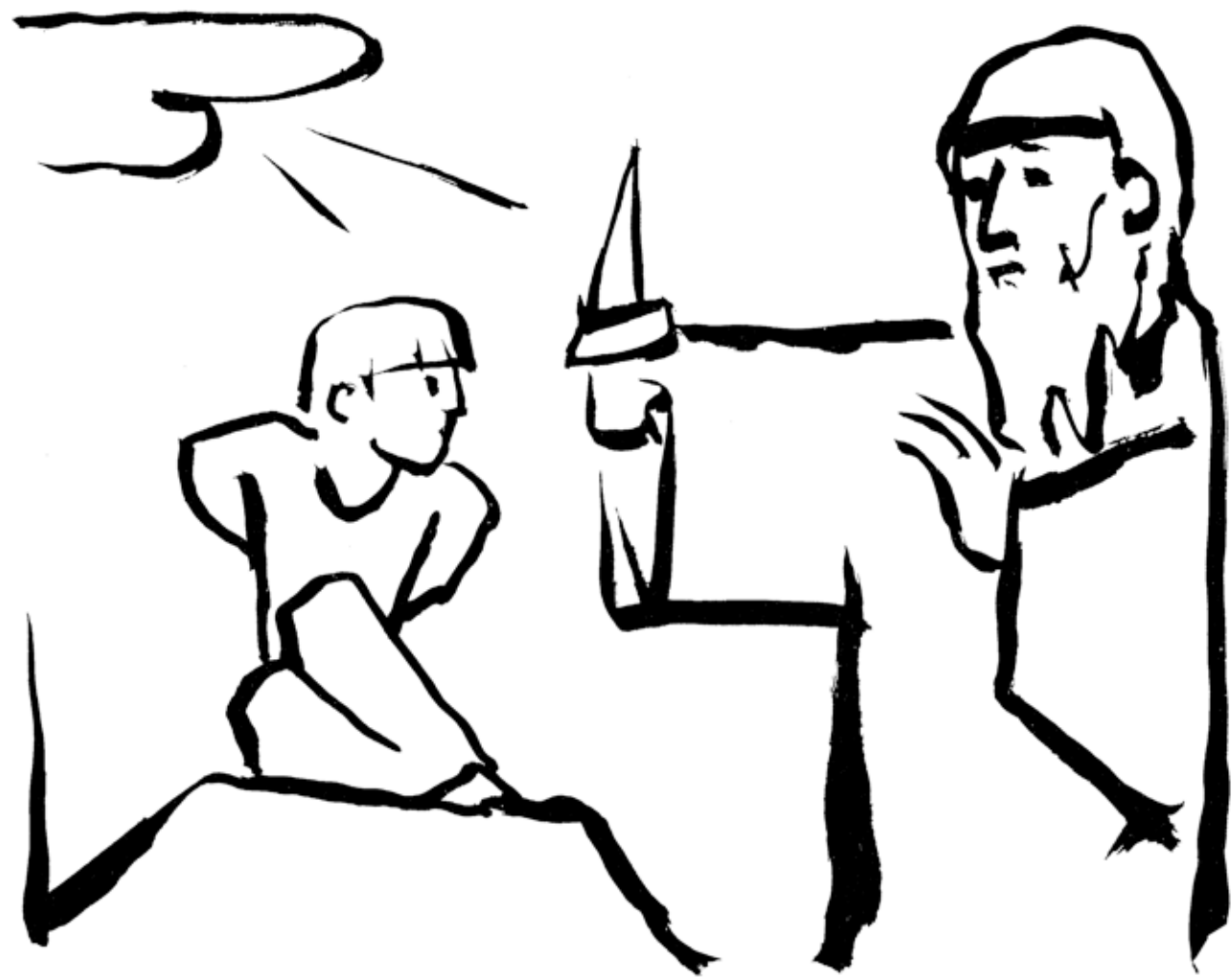
FIFTH WEEK OF LENT

2

GOSPEL: *"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day" (John 8:56).*

ABRAHAM: *"It was not all joy!"*

*Abraham.* Read the story in Genesis, chapter 22. God tested Abraham by ordering him to slay his son and offer him burnt as a sacrifice. It is the extreme limit of what Scripture ever shows God demanding — not only the slaying of a son, but one born to a woman of ninety! At the last moment, satisfied with Abraham's obedience, God withdrew the order. God is the author of all life and therefore has supreme power: God is supreme holiness and therefore any command of His is holy. Yet it is not like God to be playing cat and mouse with His children. ■ There are two points to the story: in a land where human sacrifice was common, it could be read as the clearest statement that God did not want it; and our mind goes forward to the time when the same heavenly Father "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16) to be slain for our salvation.





*"The Jews said, 'Let us not hear the voice of the Lord, nor see this great fire any more, lest we die!' " (Deuteronomy 5:24).*


*Smaller devotions are soothing!*

*Smaller devotions (Deuteronomy 5:24).* God had ordered Moses to bring all the people to meet Him at Mount Sinai. "And the mountain was wrapped in smoke because the Lord descended on it in fire . . . the whole mountain quaked, and the blast of a trumpet sounded louder and louder" (Exodus 19:17 ff.). Moses went up on the mountain and stayed there forty days and forty nights, receiving the Ten Commandments. And the people lost patience and got Aaron to make a golden statue of a calf, the sort of idol they felt at home with. Down in the left hand corner you see how *very* much at home they felt. ■ The upshot — the people promised not to worship idols, and God agreed He would not come to them again in darkness and thunder. ■ But one way or another we all have to confront God, and it will not happen without darkness in soul and anguish. And one way or another we have to conquer our appetite for earthly things that stand between us and Him, money — the golden calf — being the most tenacious of them.

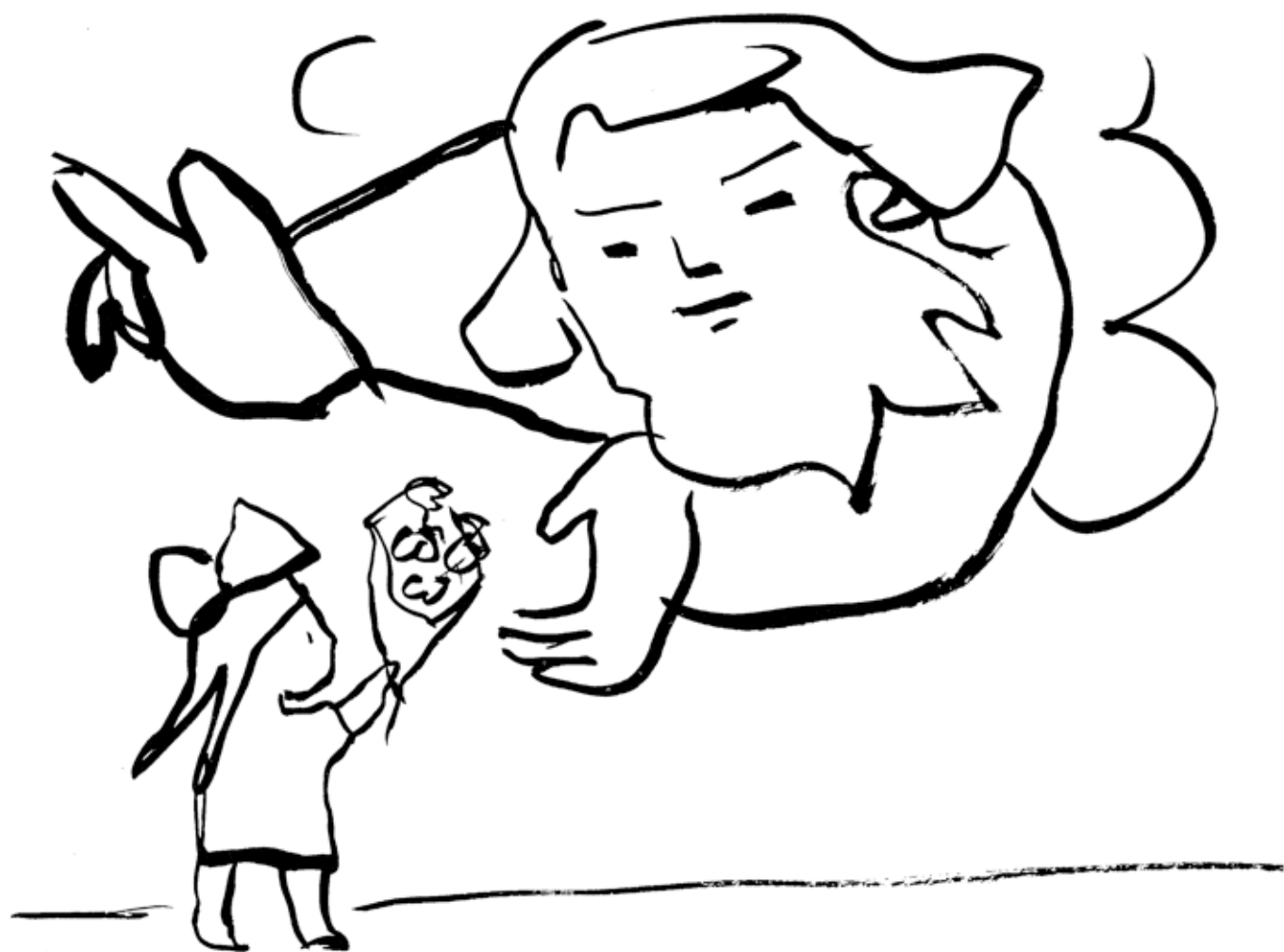


# 4

GOD THE FATHER: *"Thank you, daughter,  
so many forget Me!"*



*God the Father.* Our Lord speaks *of* His Father or *to* Him something like a hundred times. His whole object in entering our race was to lead all men to His Father. The notion of anyone loving the Son and leaving the Father in shadow would have appalled Jesus. ■ I wonder if Father's Day does set many thinking of Christ's Father — "from whom is named all fatherhood in heaven and on earth" (Ephesians 3:15). ■ As things too often are, human fathers behave so badly that the very idea of fatherhood — even God's — is tarnished for their young. Father's Day has not yet done much to improve the situation.





FOURTH AND FIFTH SUNDAYS OF EASTER

5

ISAIAH: *"The Lord God will wipe away  
the tears from all faces."*

*But not from His own!*

*The tears from all faces (Isaiah 25:8, quoted in Rev. 7:17, 21:4). Observe that "not from His own." ■ John has just reminded us that the sufferings of God the Son for our salvation were not a mere nothing to God the Father throned invulnerable in infinity. That He sent His Son is a proof of God's love, says John: Paul underlines this with "God . . . spared not his own son" (Romans 8:32). ■ It cost Son and Father heavily: what can that "costing" be in a divine Person? We cannot know, only that it is so: that there is something in the infinite God that *cares* for men's sorrows and sins — something which, if it were reducible to the dimensions of the created, would be expressible as tears. ■ Somewhere in this truth lies the answer to "How can the souls in heaven be happy when those they love are in hell?" How can God? The bliss, the tearlessness, of heaven is not idiot indifference for God or for human souls.*



JULY 26: SS. ANN AND JOACHIM, PARENTS OF MARY

JOACHIM: *"And to think I wanted a boy!"*

G


*"To think I wanted a boy."* Charlot has an extraordinary awareness of the human reality of Scripture, the go-and-come between heaven and earth. ■ Scripture does not tell us the names of Mary's parents, but two names early established themselves — Joachim and Ann. Scripture indeed tells us nothing of Mary before the announcement by Gabriel that she is to bear a Son. ■ The Second Person of the Trinity is the only one born into our race who could choose His mother, and could love her not only before He was born but before *she* was born. The Church, living with these truths, came to combine them in the doctrine that she had divine grace in her soul from the moment of her conception. ■ Joachim might very well have wanted a boy who might be the Messiah. He is not the last father to be enchanted with the girl he got.



ST. JOACHIM, FATHER OF OUR LADY

7

JOACHIM: "*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given*" (Isaiah 9:5).



*Isaiah 9:5-6.* "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given . . . upon the throne of David and over his kingdom . . . for ever more." ■ Gabriel told the twelve-year-old girl that she was to bear a son . . . "and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David . . . and of his kingdom there will be no end." ■ Was Mary instructed in the Scriptures? It seems not unlikely that the Son she was to bear would have seen to it that she did not come wholly unprepared to the greatest assignment ever given to a person of our race. And in the Magnificat, Luke shows her as quoting — and adapting — the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2). ■ If she had read the Scriptures she would have seen how close Gabriel came to Isaiah. Meditating afterwards on "the spirit of the Most High shall overshadow you," she might have remembered God's overshadowing of the Ark of the Covenant. ■ Whether she did or not, certainly *we* can. There are marvelous harmonies awaiting us.





*Timeless — Topical.* Gabriel had said, “The child that is to be born shall be called Holy, the Son of God.” Paul was to put it even more concisely — “God sent his Son, born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Mary is the only person, human or divine, who could say to God the Father, “Your Son and mine.” I wonder if she ever did. ■ How much did she yet know of Father, Son and Holy Spirit? — the Trinity had not yet been revealed to her race. Already she had so many things to keep in her heart. ■ Never overlook her. She is the link between the human race and God-made-man: We are all His mother’s people. ■ Catholics have long felt that her Son’s giving her to John didn’t stop with John. She is mother-by-adoption of all her Son’s brothers and sisters. She could not yet have known how many millions would think of her as mother. ■ And her motherhood of us has not been as dimmed by human mothers as much as God’s fatherhood of us by human fathers!





THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

G

*"Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I say rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).*

JOSEPH TO MARY: *"Don't worry. We shall reach  
Nazareth in plenty of time!"*

*The Lord is near* — that is one of Charlot's inspirations — Nazareth is under a hundred miles from Bethlehem. In a few days the Second Person of the Trinity will have emerged into the light of our common day. Meanwhile He is already near. ■ He had chosen to enter our race, virginally indeed, but in the normal way of conception, nine months growing in the womb, birth, infancy. . . . The human nature was growing, never to cease growing till the Ascension. But the Person was from the beginning wholly divine. ■ There have always been those, like the fifth century Nestorians, who could not bring themselves to admit God at His mother's breast. They know now.



*Welcome to Bethlehem.*

HOTEL CLERK: *"No luggage, no room!"*

# 10


*Welcome to Bethlehem.* My impression is that the hard-nosed character here is the only contemporary character in the book. In one sense they all are of our century and every century. But this one has late-twentieth-century written all over him. I rather think I met him years ago in Windsor, Ontario. He would have understood the late-twentieth-century boy who blamed Joseph — “he ought to have booked a reservation.” ■ Of course the rich travel more comfortably than the poor, but “there was no place for them in the inn” is not as bad as it sounds. The inn in Bethlehem probably had few separate bedrooms, or none. There was probably not a square inch in the town in which Mary could have her baby in privacy. So they went to a cave in which animals were stalled, and the boy was born in a manger. ■ But Charlot has caught the essence of it.



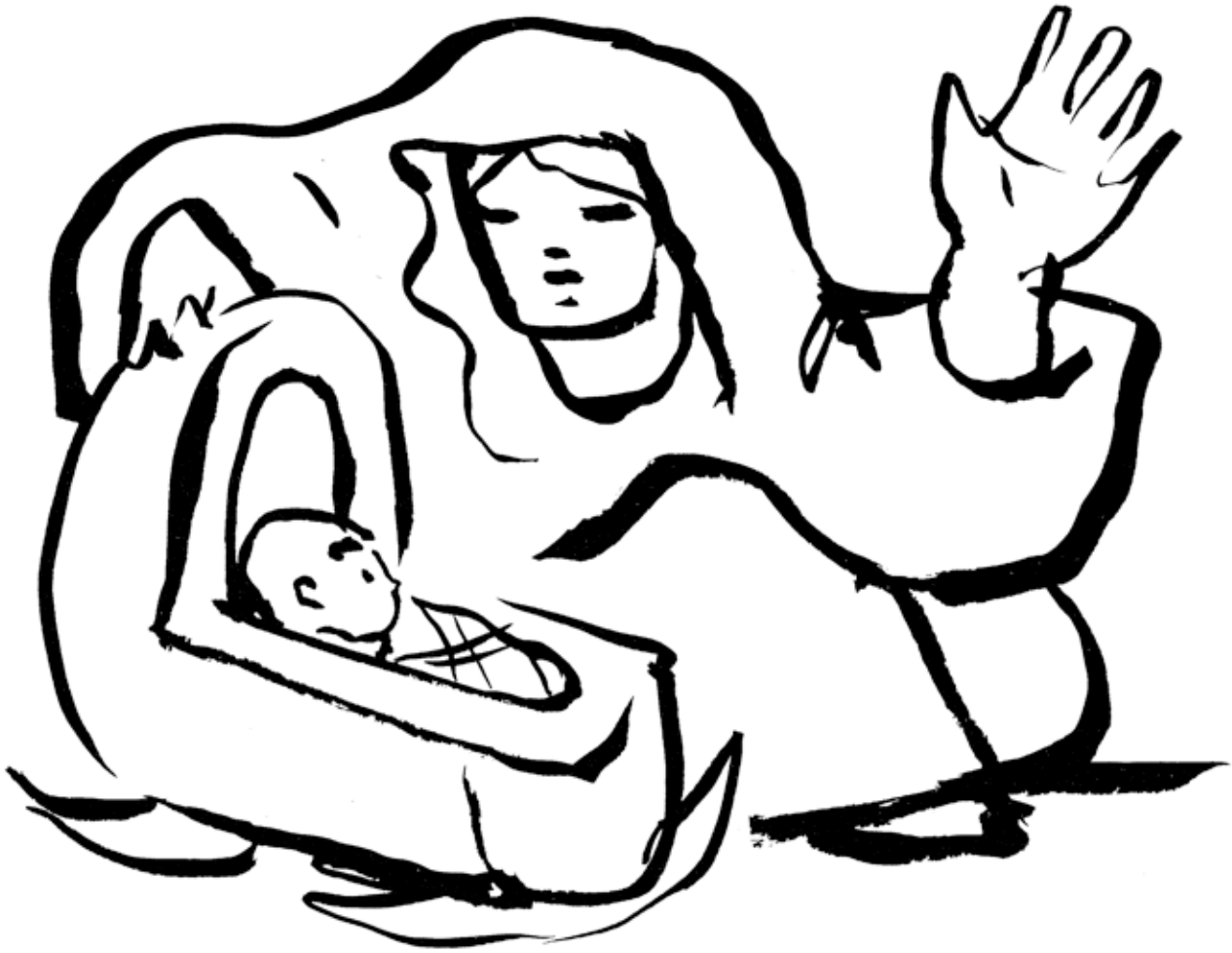
CHRISTMAS (DECEMBER 25)

11

*"Rockaby, Baby . . .  
... The wind will blow soon enough!"*



*Rockaby, Baby.* This drawing, like one other in the book, leaves me with nothing to add. (But who, besides Charlot, ever thought of "Rockaby, Baby" as a Christmas Carol?)



*Point of view.*

*Family in the lowest income tax bracket!*

*Lowest Income Tax Bracket. . . .* There would have been a donkey there, the one that carried Mary from Nazareth. There would have been an ox there; mangers are for animals to eat from. And don't miss the star. ■ A carpenter was exactly where Charlot puts him — not among the very poor, whom income tax would not have reached: down towards the lower edge of the taxable. ■ The staff in Joseph's hand means that he would have had the warning that Herod was determined to search and destroy, and that he must put himself beyond Herod's reach in Egypt. A carpenter could make a living anywhere, and there was a very large Jewish colony in Egypt.






ST. JOSEPH (MARCH 19, MAY 1)

13

*Joseph the worker:  
He knew how to pray with his hands.*



*Joseph the Worker.* No one but Mary had anything remotely approaching Joseph's day-in-day-out contact with, experience of, God-made-man. He was the head of the family. He had God's message that the child "conceived in Mary is of the Holy Spirit. . . . He will save his people from their sins." This was the child he and Mary had to bring up — really bring up, for the child's divinity did not enable Him to bypass the difficulties that go with being human. He had to be taught. ■ The strangeness must have been always in Joseph's mind — in the mind that guided his hand. He was not a monk; he was a carpenter. He is surely the patron saint of all who love God but must devote most of their waking hours to handling things — or ideas, for that matter.



# 14

PHARISEE: "Who does he think he is? God?"

*The Child Jesus in the Temple.* Mary and Joseph had lost twelve-year-old Jesus. After a day of anguished searching they found Him in the Temple, "among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." It was a daily custom in the Temple — a learned Rabbi would gather a group around him, answer their questions, put questions to them (not to learn from them, of course, but as a teaching method). Nothing I should love to know better than even one of the questions Jesus asked them. ■ His answers to their questions must have been brilliant, for they "were amazed at his understanding and his answers" — the Greek word for "amazed" means "quite taken out of themselves." And some of them would not have liked it, as a dull teacher dislikes a brilliant pupil — "wants the conceit knocked out of him." ■ Mary and Joseph were astonished too: once again the Greek word is stronger — something like "electrified."



FIRST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

15

*Cana: water into wine.*

MAITRE D': *"Ha! Vintage year, this  
30 A.D.! Truly a wine with spirit!"*

*Cana.* Charlot at his most timeless — first-century steward and today's maître d'hotel, no change there. We miss a lot in our Scripture reading by concentrating on the leading person. Jesus was not living in a vacuum; the people He was with were not mere figures, either in themselves, or to Him; their reactions cast light on Him. ■ Don't miss the subtlety of a wine "with spirit." People, ourselves included, often say the profoundest things, meaning only the most prosaic. Till the end of his life that steward would have dined out on the story of the best wine kept to the last.



# 16

*"Entering the synagogue on the sabbath as was his habit, he stood up to do the reading" (Luke 4:16).*

*Both laws as one!*

*Entering the synagogue.* Read Luke 4:16-30. This was Jesus' first appearance in the Nazareth synagogue since He had become famous. He had worked miracles — in Cana, four miles away; in Capernaum, twenty or so. Naturally He was called upon to read and expound the day's Scripture. ■ It is a terrible episode. For having claimed to embody the passage handed to Him from Isaiah, He proceeds to comment on two passages where God had worked miracles for Gentiles! The congregation, His own townspeople, were enraged and dragged Him out to hurl him over a cliff to His death, "but passing through the midst of them, he went away." ■ Paul says, "Preach the word in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). I've never heard a sermon on preaching, or doing anything else for the faith, "out of season." For most of us it's never in season. We keep silent about our Savior — the time is not ripe, local conditions are peculiar, we might do more harm than good. Pity we weren't there to warn Jesus!





FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

17

GOSPEL: *Jesus cures Peter's mother-in-law.*

*St. Peter loved his mother-in-law!*

*Peter's Mother-in-Law.* Charlot is probably right. Scripture doesn't say that Peter loved her, but he was a loving kind of person. I wonder what she made of Peter. ■ We sometimes wonder if Christ had any doubts about choosing for the head of His Church a man with the impulsive courage to get himself into situations in which he had not the steady courage to sustain himself. His wife's mother may have wondered similarly if she would not have been wise to choose a rather steadier husband for her daughter.



# 18

*Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-11; Luke 9:28-36).* Luke probably got his account from John, who was there, and we know that Mark got his from Peter, who was there and who also tells us of it (2 Peter 1:17). James, alone of the three, was dead when these accounts were being written; he was the first Apostle to be martyred. ■ It is a glorious episode. Moses was *the* Jew, the Law-giver, towering over even Abraham; Elijah was *the* prophet, though he never wrote a book. ■ “Three of a kind” truly — these two representative men of the Chosen People, and Christ, representative man of the whole human race. And what was the conversation about? The death Christ was to “accomplish” in Jerusalem (Luke 9:30). The Israel of old was being informed officially. ■ We tend to remember the Transfiguration because of Peter. He had just been promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and once again he said the wrong thing — not knowing what he said! What a gift he had for it.



# 19

*Mary of Magdala.* The psychiatrist, of course, would have first to find out who she was. We first meet "Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils had gone," as one of a group of women healed by Jesus who went about with Him and the Twelve in Galilee. ■ We do not find the name again till Calvary, where she was with Our Lord's Mother. And on Resurrection morning she meets her risen Lord at the tomb (John 20). ■ But it is hard not to think of her (Charlot and the Church do) as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who had "chosen the better part," who "anointed Christ's feet," to the fury of Judas (John 11-12). It was from her home in Bethany that He started out on Palm Sunday. It is hard to think she was not on Calvary. ■ Had the family come from Galilee? To complicate matters there is that other woman, a "sinner," who had earlier anointed Christ's feet in Galilee (Luke 7:36). Was she Mary, the sister of Martha? Was that her conversion? Did the whole family move to Judea, and was that why? ■ We can see why, to a modern, each of the three women was in need of psychiatry, especially the possessed-by-seven-devils one and the absorbed-in-Jesus one. If Mary Magdalene was all three, we know more about her than about any other woman in the New Testament.



PASSION SUNDAY (PALM SUNDAY)

20

*Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.  
The crowd spread their cloaks before Him,  
shouting, "Long live the Son of David!"*

PHARISEE: *"Well, until Friday anyhow!"*

*Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:7-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:35-40).* Some of the Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ■ It is incredible that Christians, celebrating Palm Sunday through the centuries, did not realize that it was the complete answer to the charge that the Jewish people had killed Christ! It had shown the authorities that they could not arrest Him openly "for fear of the people." He had to be arrested at night. For the same reason they could not slay Him themselves — they must force the Roman Procurator to do it for them. Whatever the people's feelings might be, they could not fight Rome's power. They tried it some forty years later, and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.





*These were the first to call Him a King!*

# 21

*Christ the King (Matthew 27:27-31)*. It was not because of the Kingdom He had come to found that Christ's enemies wanted Him dead. But that was what they selected as the charge most likely to move Pontius Pilate to execute Him. Through all the accounts of the trial the kingship charge weaves its mocking way. ■ Pilate's soldiers put a scarlet robe on Him, twisted thorns into a crown for His head, thrust a reed into His hand as a sceptre, knelt before Him jeering at Him. Over His head on the cross He was mocked as "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." On the cross He was still mocked as King of Israel. It was a sort of witches' sabbath, with "King" as the key word. ■ The point for us — hardly worth saying. No one has ever mocked His Kingship as calamitously as we, who give Him the title in all solemnity and proceed to go our own way, do our own will, *in His name*. Lucky for any one of us who has never been the figure on the left.



HOLY WEEK OR TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

READING: *"I gave my back to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard" (Isaiah 50:6).*

22

*Portrait of the Just Man!*

*Portrait of the Just Man (Isaiah 50:6).* The text of Isaiah goes on: "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Read the whole of Isaiah 53, from which Christ quoted at the Last Supper. ■ Whose maltreatment was Isaiah describing eight centuries earlier? There are plenty of candidates proposed. Christ said it was Himself, and the description fits Him down to the smallest detail. ■ Isaiah had said that He "raised not his voice." After the first blow in the face, at which He raised a perfectly logical point of order, Christ made no protest whatever. He uttered no complaint, blamed no one, judged no one. His mind was too totally concentrated on the world He was redeeming — while this was what that world was doing to Him. ■ Then, as always, the just man would be a fool to count on receiving justice here below.



JULY 22: ST. MARY MAGDALENE (2)

23

READING: *"In the streets and crossroads I will seek him whom my heart loves. I sought him but I did not find him" (Song of Songs 3:2).*

GOSPEL: *"Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' " (John 20:16).*

*Mary.* This one is definitely Magdalene; the Gospel calls her so. ■ She had come with spices and such, whatever was needed for a body that had had to be thrust somewhere in a hurry before the Sabbath made all action on it impossible. ■ She did not at first recognize the risen Lord — perhaps because her eyes were swollen with weeping, perhaps because He really was different. ■ But if Jesus was different, Mary gives the same feeling — of love and awe merging into each other — as the Mary who had anointed His feet at Bethany. ■ Remember what Jesus said about it — “Wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.”



# 24

*Escape from a mean planet* (Luke 24:51. Acts 1:9-11). That certainly is what Christ's going up into the sky looked like: Charlot shows the wounds in His hands and His side, the feet hidden. But He was not running away from a world that had not deserved Him; He was completing the sacrifice He was offering for its redemption. ■ On Calvary He had offered Himself as a victim slain unjustly. By raising Him from death, God showed His acceptance of the sacrifice. Now we see something that none of the myriad foreshadowing sacrifices had shown or could possibly have shown: God taking to Himself the Victim — once slain, now forever living. ■ At last, glorified at His Father's right hand, Christ could send the Spirit (read John 7:39). Ten days later came Pentecost.



EARTH



# 25

*"Judge not and you shall not be judged."*

CHRIST TO PILATE: *"So, we meet again!"*

*"Judge not and you shall not be judged" (Matthew 7:11).* What did the whole Jesus business mean to Pilate? Anatole France has a story of some one meeting the Roman long after and asking him about it: Pilate just couldn't remember. ■ I don't believe it. Read all three accounts on the confrontation, then concentrate on John's. It was an experience such as no Roman officer had ever had, and Pilate knew it. ■ He was not likely to forget; nor would his wife have let him. Remember the message she sent to him as he sat in judgment, "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." ■ I think he would not have been wholly surprised to learn at last who it was that he had crucified, and how unique it made himself — the only judge who had ever had God dragged up before him, who had ever had God executed. The phrase of Christ's that Charlot quotes fits Pilate with a totality no one will ever match. We shall all be condemned if we condemn other people, but Pilate condemned the God-man. We are in no position to do that. Though I wonder. . . .



JULY 22: ST. MARY MAGDALENE (3)

26

*Song of Songs: "In the streets and crossroads  
I will seek him whom my heart loves."*

*At the crossroads, the Cross!*

*At the crossroads. What could be added to this?*



PENTECOST (EIGHTH SUNDAY OF EASTER)

27

*"Are not all those men who are speaking Galileans? How is it that each of us hears them speak in his native tongue?" (Acts 2:7).*

*The Holy Spirit speaks all tongues, but not "officialese."*

*The Holy Spirit.* At the Last Supper the Apostles were desolated when Christ told them that He must leave them. For their consolation, He told them that if He did not go the Holy Spirit could not come. Consolation? They probably found as little consolation in the prospect as we find in the happening. ■ If you have some notion of what lay behind the replacement, so to speak, of the Second Person of the Trinity by the Third, you won't need to be told to think deeper into it. If you can't imagine what it meant, find someone who can enlighten you.



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

28

*Peter's followers were surprised that the gifts of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the Gentiles also (Acts 10:45).*

*Better get accustomed to it!*

*Better get used to it.* Catholicity sounds majestic, with all nations marching in step to the drillmaster in the Vatican. But in its round-the-world dailiness, you will find more ways of being Catholic (not all of them majestic) than the canon lawyer knows. Even under Rome's watchful eye, the nations manage to give the Church in their country their own unmistakable color. ■ If all central control were removed and each nation went its own way, the result might look like chaos. Or it might look like Charlot's picture.





# 29

*No fall, no Paul.* True enough. Without that extraordinary experience on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), Paul would just have gone on being Saul, with his knife into Christians. ■ It not only converted him, it defined his life work. He had been persecuting Christians. Christ asks, "Why are you persecuting *me*?" The identity of Christ and Christian, all one person in Christ's mystical body. No one ever taught it as Paul did. ■ That falling off his high horse is a symbol for all of us — one way or another we have to see ourselves as low as we are. For most, Christ does not do it so spectacularly. But then He's not preparing us for a job as big as the one He gave Paul to do.



JUNE 28: VIGIL OF SS. PETER AND PAUL

30

*"I went up to Jerusalem to visit with Cephas, with whom I stayed fifteen days" (Galatians 1:18).*

PETER: *"You first, Paul."*

PAUL: *"You first, Peter!"*


*Peter and Paul.* A curious pair, the Lake fisherman and the learned Pharisee. They found each other difficult. Paul "withstood Peter to his face" over the question of the Jewish Christians eating with the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11). Peter found in the Letters of "our beloved brother Paul" some things "hard to be understood," which "the ignorant and unstable twist . . . to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:15 ff.). He was not Paul's equal intellectually, but he made a better head of the new Church. He had the instinct to see that Paul's words would be "twisted" — he could have had hardly a notion how much! ■ Both men were essential; the Church celebrates them together.



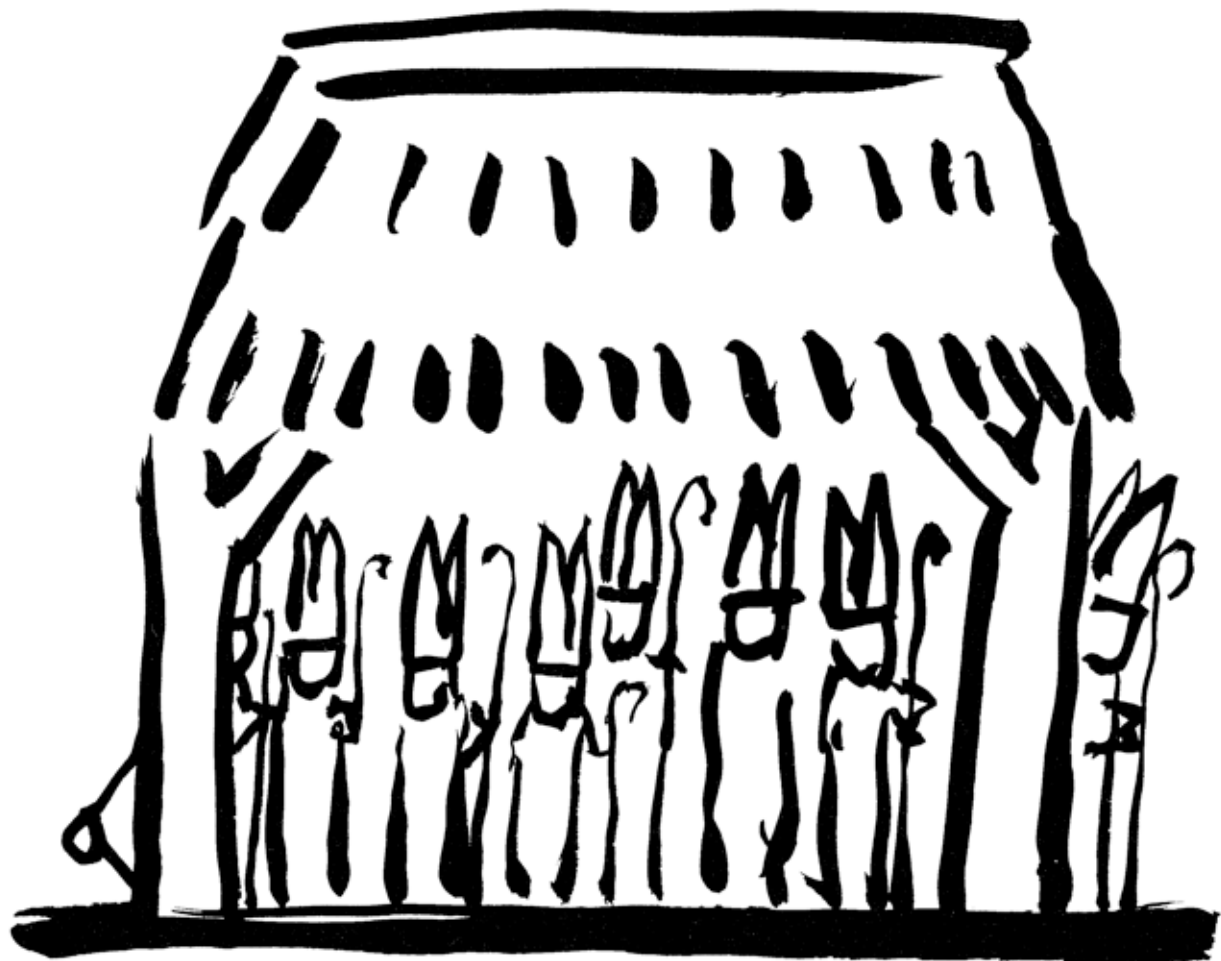
FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

31

*Collegiality (cf. John 10:1-16):  
One sheepfold for the shepherds!*



*Collegiality.* I wonder what Charlot had in mind here. I think I won't ask him. I'll write what the drawing brings to my own mind. ■ The good shepherd, said Christ, goes to look for the lost one, leaving the ninety-nine. I do not know where in the world Christ's command is obeyed. For the most part the practicing Catholic is pampered. The dropout is left to his lostness. ■ While in our very multiplex world shepherds must have offices and keep office hours, this cannot be all that Christ meant by going to search for the lost sheep. ■ But turn over.



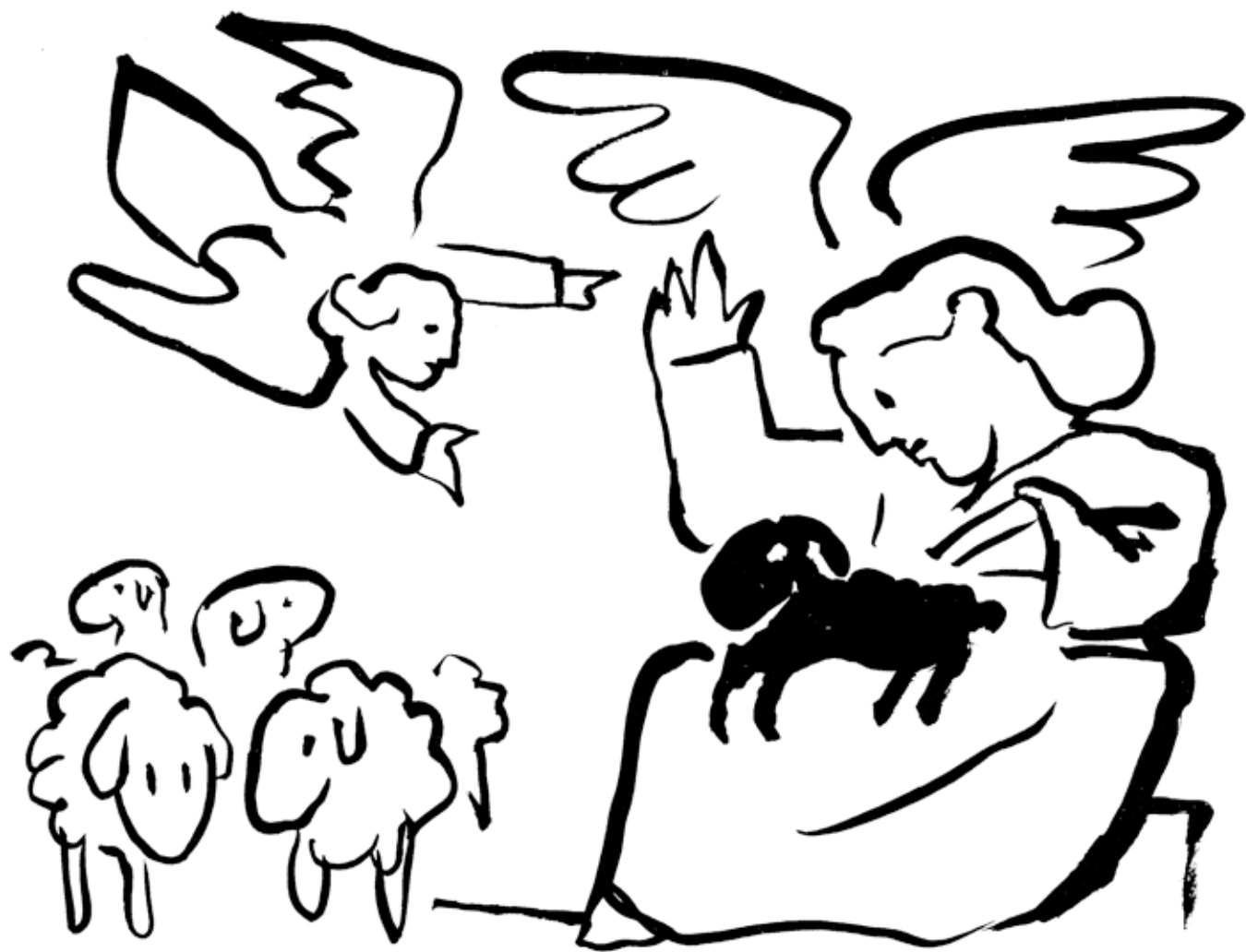
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

32

GOSPEL: ". . . *there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety-nine just . . .*" (Luke 15:7).

LAMBS: "*Discrimination, that's what it is!*"

*Joy in heaven over one sinner.* It does seem tough on the virtuous. Their case was stated by the Prodigal Son's elder brother, and we can't help seeing his point. ■ BUT which *is* the lost sheep? Augustine prays to be cleansed from his secret sins — the ones he had grown too hardened to see as sinful! ■ Might you or I, conscious of our rectitude, be the lost sheep? It would be fun if it turned out that it was your arrival in heaven, or mine, that caused the biggest angelic carnival of the year.



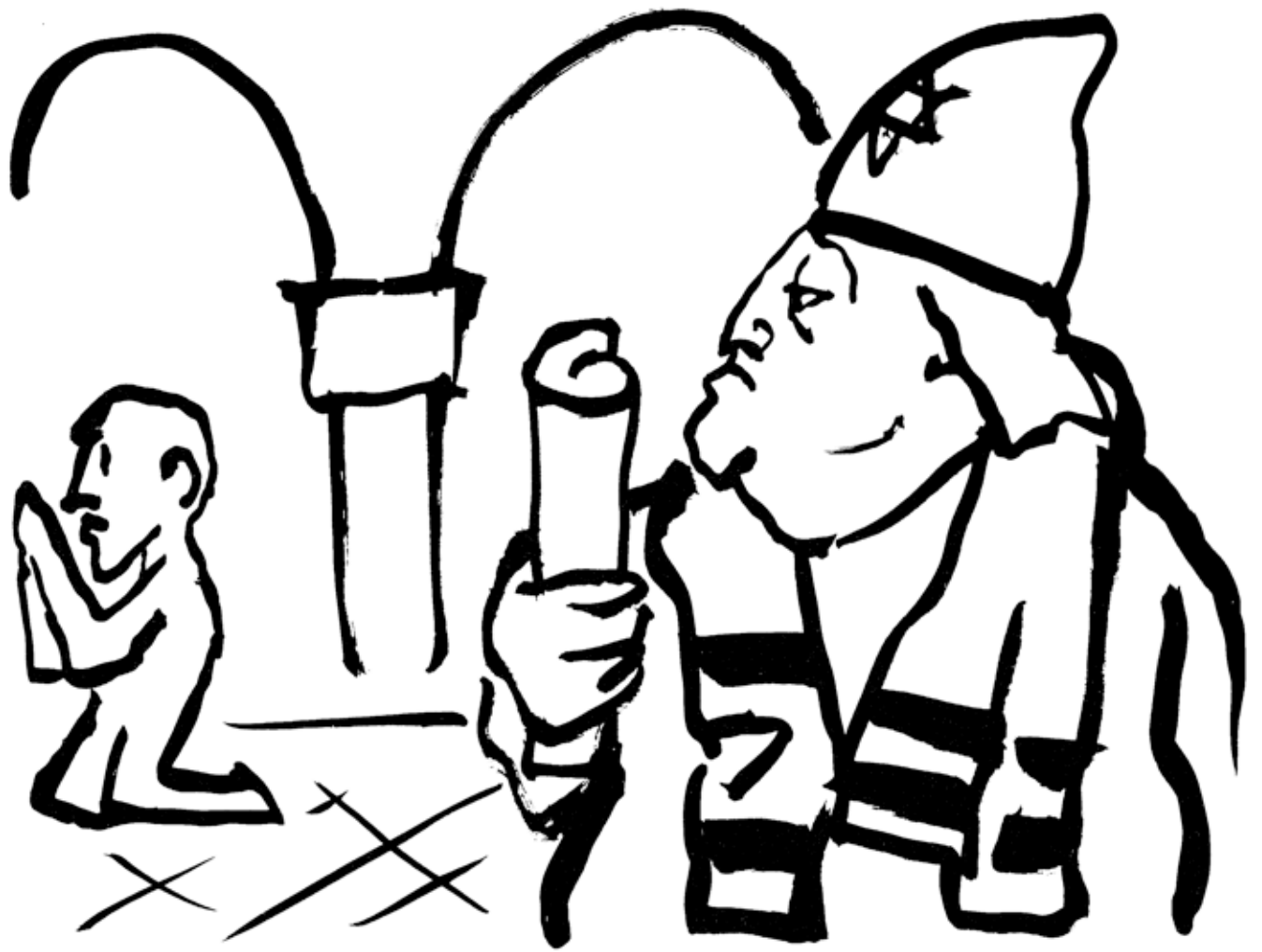


THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

PHARISEE: "*Obviously his Father is not my Father!*"

33

*Obviously his Father is not my Father.* It's the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14). We now call him a tax-collector, which is rough on a lot of respectable civil servants (I once addressed them at a Communion Breakfast); let's call him a tax-extorter. Matthew, one of the Twelve, who heard the parable, had been a publican. ■ Which of the two was the lost sheep. Both? O.K. Which was the "lostest"? The Good Shepherd seems to have had no doubt. ■ The Pharisee thanked God he was "not like this publican." Our tendency today is to thank God we are not like the Pharisee. If we do, the parable condemns us. Nothing is really safe but humility.



# 34

PAUL TO CORINTHIANS (1 Cor. 1:22): *"Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom . . ."*

*. . . and you and I ask, "What's in it for me?"*

*Paul to the Corinthians.* What's in it for me? The question bites uncomfortably deep. When we are reminded of some point of Christ's revelation that we have been ignoring, we don't actually use those exact words. We say that we don't find it relevant. ■ On the Areopagus (Acts 17) Paul told his hearers about the resurrection of the dead. "We will hear you another time," they said as they strolled away. It did not strike them as having anything in it for them. ■ What's in it for me? Reality now, and maturity eternally.



TWENTY-SECOND (OR 24TH) SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

35

GOSPEL: *"If a man wishes to come after me, let him . . . take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34).*

CHRISTIAN: *"But my cross is so heavy, O Lord!"*

*My cross is so heavy.* It just doesn't help to remind ourselves that Christ's cross was heavier: Christ, we tell ourselves, was God (quite irrelevant, since He never used His divinity to save Himself agony). When someone adjures us not to be "delicate members of a thorn-crowned head" we wonder if he or she has ever suffered at all. ■ But there it is: the cross people get is never tailored to their specifications (with the crucifying elements touched in lightly). But surprisingly often it is tailored to their needs. It can't help being so, really. Because one's self is an element, the key element, in every cross.



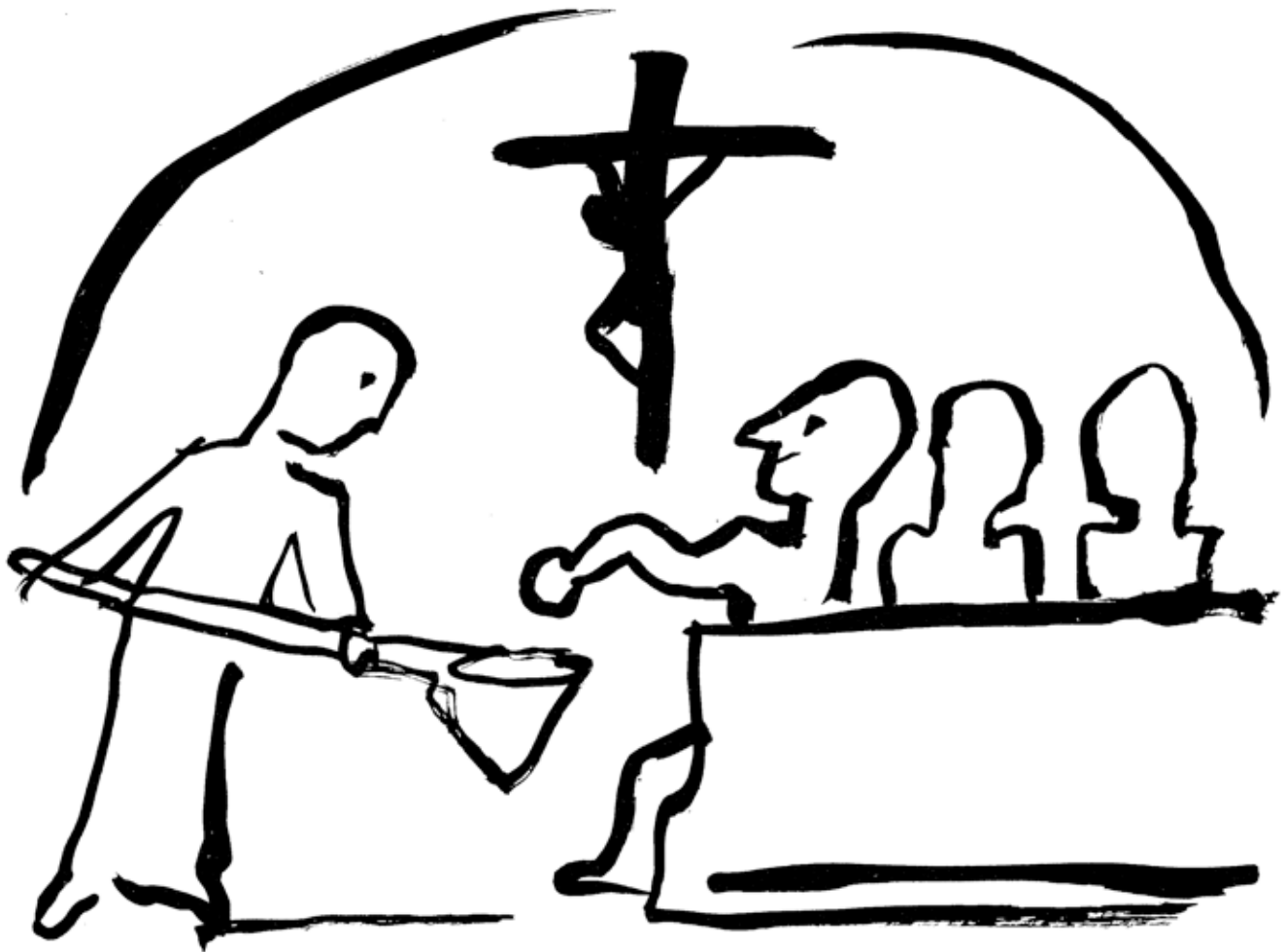
TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

36

READING: ". . . bear your share of the hardship which the gospel entails" (2 Timothy 1:8).

PARISHIONER: "That we do, every Sunday!"

*Bear your share of the hardship which the Gospel entails (2 Timothy 1:8).* Charlot is laughing in order not to cry, laughing at himself and at all of us. There is the magnificence of our calling as Christians — love your neighbor as yourself, bear one another's burdens, do good to them that hate you. There is the meagerness of our performance. ■ Are we fooling ourselves? Most of the time, probably. Don't we really mean what we profess? Yes, we do mean it, but let's face it — we are such poor fish, aren't we? ■ But in our meagerness and our poor-fishery, Christ our Brother loves us, and God loves us.





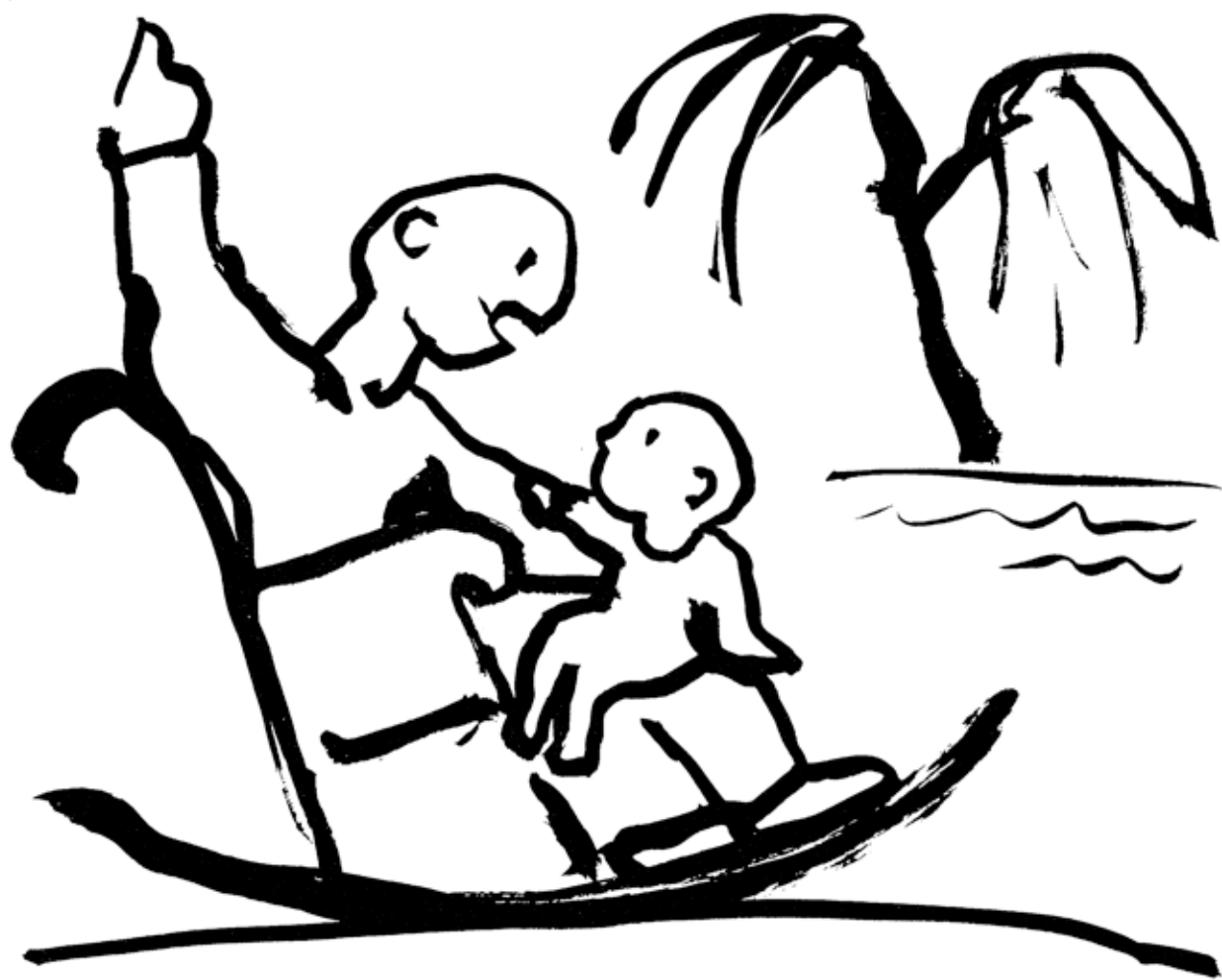
TWENTY-SIXTH WEEK OF THE YEAR

37

*"By the streams of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion" (Psalm 137:1).*

*In the year 2000: "And, believe it or not,  
in my time Mass was said in Latin!"*

*In the Year 2000.* I'm glad the old boy is cheerful about the fading out of Latin. Anyone who feels that if Latin goes the Mass might as well go too has never grasped what the Mass is. One of this sort said to me that the Mass is a divine mystery and therefore requires a mystery language. In the next drawing you see St. Jerome as a reminder of the happy days when Latin *was* the vernacular. ■ After all ritual concerns people approaching God together, so that it must suit the generality; it cannot fit every taste: it would be too difficult to approach God together separately.



SEPTEMBER 30: ST. JEROME, TRANSLATOR OF THE BIBLE

JEROME: *"Now they say that my vernacular is all wrong!"*


38

*St. Jerome.* You like this picture, I hope. Would you have liked the man himself? A great many people didn't. The temper was volcanic, the vanity easily stirred. Look at the mouth. I think the moral many people have drawn from his life is that if he could be a saint, they themselves need not despair. ■ His translation of the Bible, you observe, is called the Vulgate — i.e. into the common tongue, in plain fact the vernacular, which it was around 400 A.D. Now we think of Latin as a dead language, which it need not be, and of Jerome as a dead scholar, which he is far from being. ■ You might not have guessed from looking at him that he used, and valued, the services of educated women. He was ahead of his time: fourteen hundred years later a French translation of his brilliant letters to them substituted "Venerable Brethren" for their names.

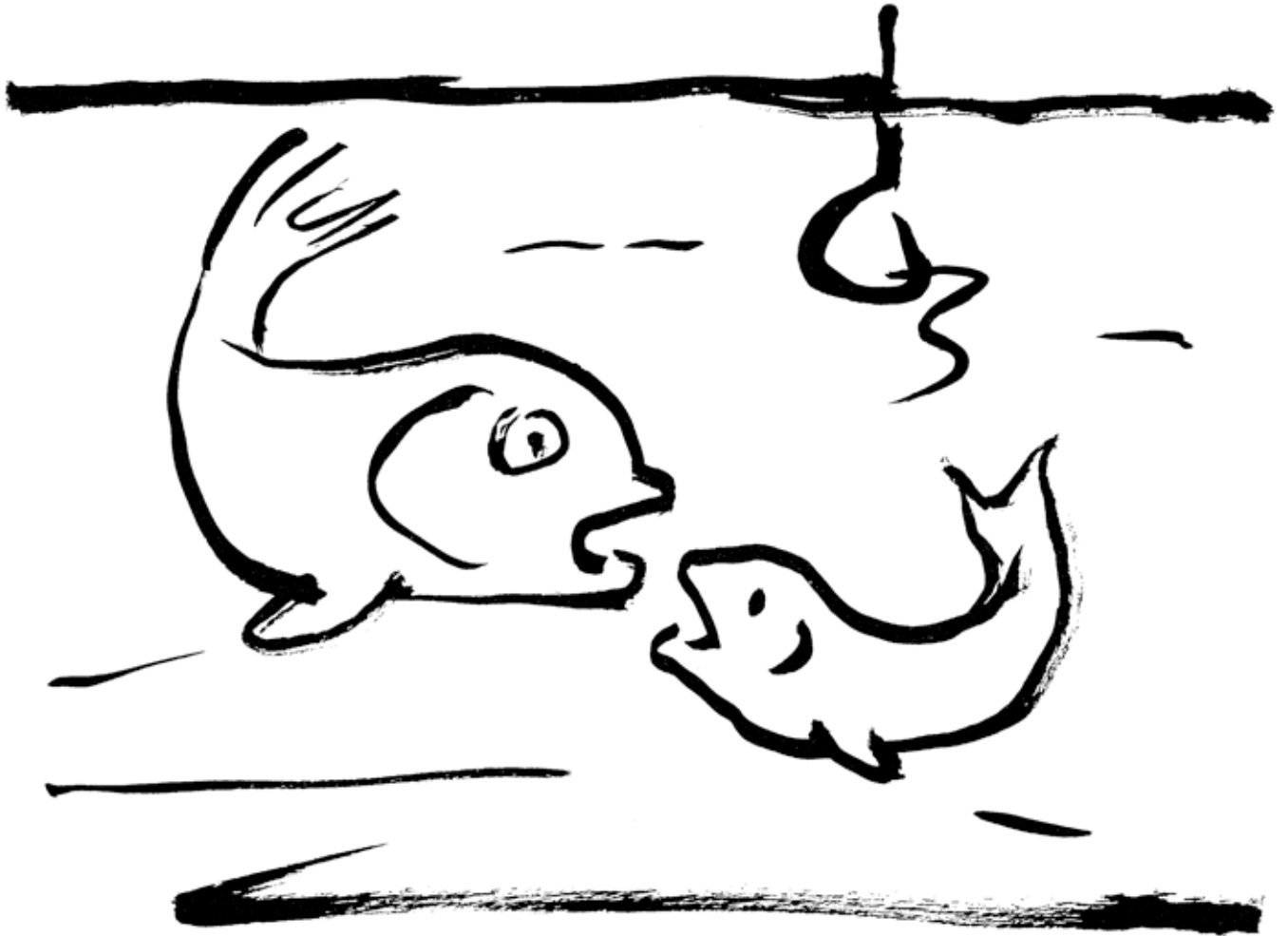


# 39

*Big fish to little fish:  
"Lent is a dangerous time, son,  
but it used to be even worse!"*



*Lent.* Do you miss fish on Friday, abstinence in Lent, fasting before Holy Communion? I do. ■ They were no great austerity, of course. But they were reminders of that Friday in Palestine when the world was redeemed. They were inspired pedagogy. I feel that in matters of this sort the Church has lost the sure touch she seemed to have when I was young. Or perhaps her children are less touchable. ■ Would I bring them back? For everybody? I guess not. For myself? There's nothing to stop me. But somehow one doesn't get around to it. If only the Church would once more tell us to.



# 40

*Mass facing the people . . .*

*. . . on a weekday!*


*On a weekday.* Why go to Mass on Sunday? ■ But that is the second question. The first is — what's the point of going to Mass at all? What's gained by going, lost by not going? Once you have grasped (1) that the Mass is Calvary, not as it happened nineteen centuries ago but as Christ is now offering it to His Father for sinners, and (2) that at Mass the priest *and you* join with Christ in the offering—the question changes. ■ Why not go to Mass every day?





# 41

ANGEL: *"To think that, when he grows up, he won't believe in me!"*



*Guardian Angels.* Considering that Christ said that the angels of the little ones "behold the face of my heavenly Father continually," it is odd that we are letting angels fade out. The unbeliever doesn't even bother to give any reason why bodiless beings should not exist, he doesn't even sneer: he simply raises his amused eyebrow. Marvelous the power of the raised eyebrow! ■ The question is simply which face matters more to us, the eyebrow one or the one the angels gaze on.



# 42

*Genesis up to date.*

*And God said to the atomic scientists:  
"Why are you hiding?"*

*Why are you hiding?* After the first sin God put that question to Adam and Eve. That was in mankind's beginning. Charlot has Him put it to the men who may be bringing our world to an end. ■ But *are* they hiding? Is there any general sense of guilt among them? Some of them certainly have felt it. But the whole feel of our age is that there must be no bounds to the progress of knowledge, whatever happens to mankind. ■ The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, Christ said; it was a daring thing to say in that time and place — it helped to get Him slain. Who, in our time and place, would say science is made for man, not man for science? It would take nerve. ■ Does mankind matter anyway? *Has* mankind a spokesman? Wisdom has no lobby.



TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

43

PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS: “. . . a man . . . shall be joined to his wife,  
and the two shall be made into one” (5:31, quoting Genesis 2:24).

*Well, that's one way of looking at it!*

*A man shall be joined to his wife.* That is the charter of sex's sacredness. Paul said it to the Ephesians (5:31); Christ had said it to the Jews (Matthew 19:5. Mark 10:7-8). God had said it in the beginning (Genesis 2:24). In all three the word for “one” is “one flesh.” ■ The drawing raises the question of birth control. I can't make any bright remarks about that in a few lines. I merely note that it is in those words of God, Christ, Paul, that decisions about it should be made. Anyone who does not accept the sacredness of sex is not qualified even to have an opinion.

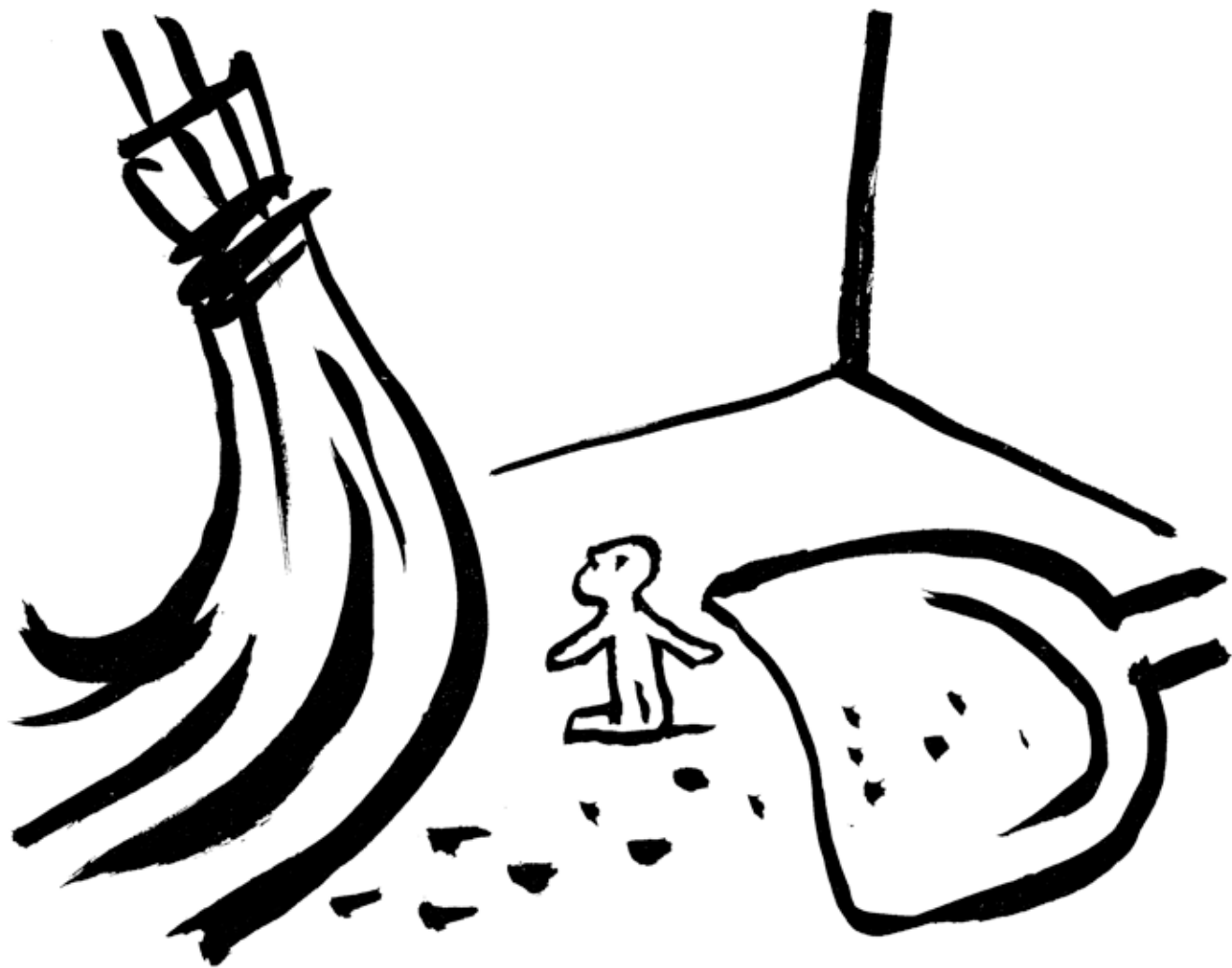


# 44

*Ash Wednesday: "... you are dust. . . ."*

*Obviously!*

*Remember, man, you are dust, and to dust you will return.* (Ash Wednesday). You are dust, says the Church. ■ You are garbage, says the abortionist (one of them did, publicly). ■ Both are oversimplifying. ■ Man's body can crumble into dust and be swept away like garbage, but the man himself has not returned to dust; there is more of him than the ashcan holds. ■ God made man of the dust of the earth, but He made him into His own image and likeness, gave him an immortal soul, died to redeem him: made man as such an object of reverence. ■ And every one of us — you, I, Shakespeare, Francis of Assisi, Christ — began as a foetus.





EIGHTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

45

GOSPEL: ". . . *the lilies of the field . . . not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of these*" (*Matthew 6:28-29; cf. Luke 12:27*).

SOLOMON: "*Why rub it in?*"

*Solomon in all his glory.* Let's face it, I have said. Facing it is a first step toward sanity, whatever the particular "it" happens to be. At the moment I'm thinking of the simple truth that Christ's values and priorities too often strike us as eccentric — if He is on center, we are quite a way off it. ■ Solomon's greatest glory was the Temple he built. Would you really find a lily of the field more beautiful? ■ Christ would have. And, as Charlot sees, so would Solomon — now.



# 46

GOSPEL: *"He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin . . ." (Matthew 10:39).*

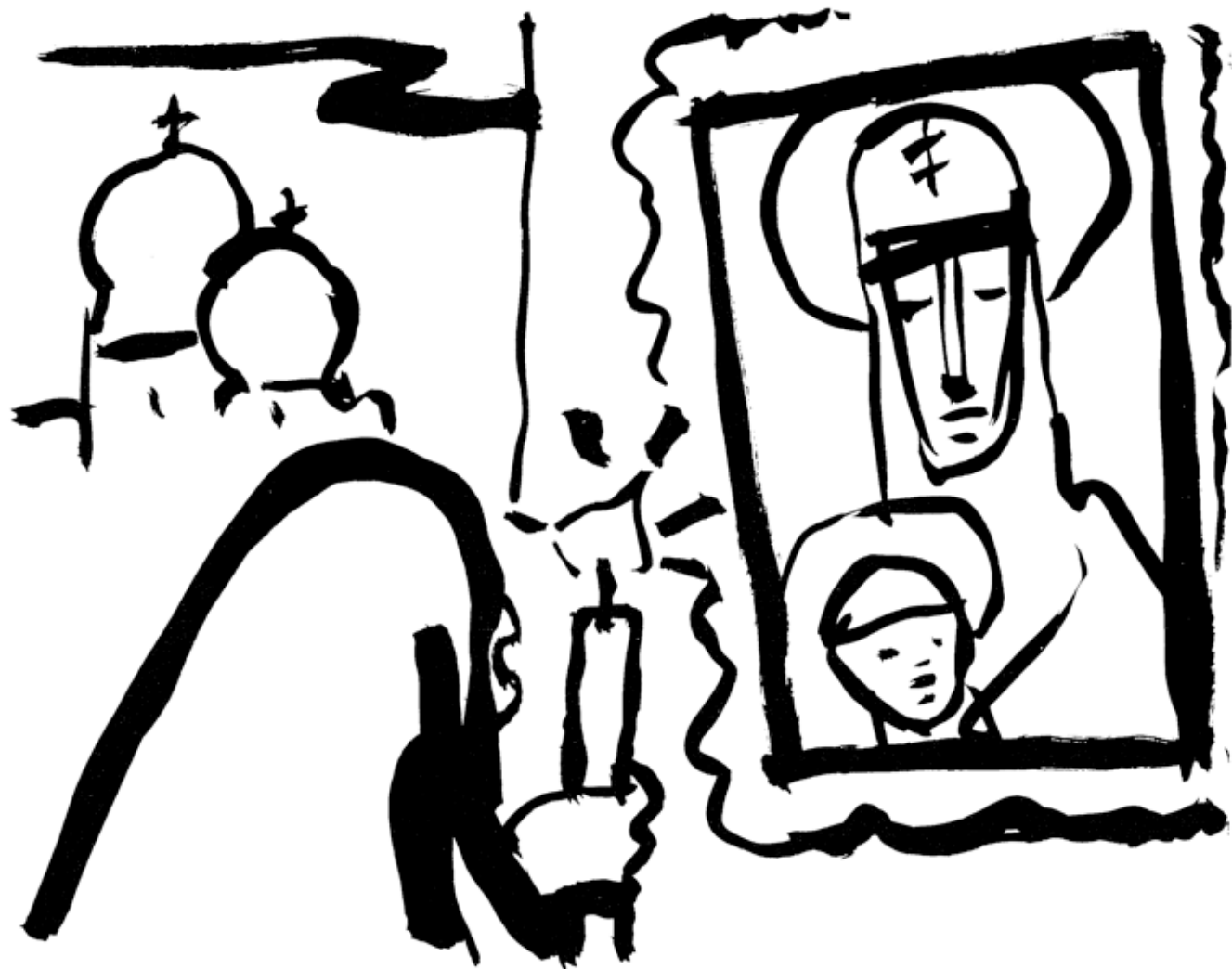
ARTIST: *"At last I found myself!"*

*At last I found myself.* In the sixties everyone was seeking personal identity — "who am I, what am I, why am I?" — looking for it in marijuana, LSD, hypnosis, gurus in California, ashrams in India. To the hardbaked majority, it seemed amusing. In people like the one drawn here it is sheerly comic. ■ But for great numbers it was, is, a cry of desperation in a world growing every day more chaotic, a cry of hunger for depth in a world drowning in its own shallows. ■ Christ wept over Jerusalem — "If only you had known the things that were for your peace." He has what the hungry need, and the desperate. But who is to tell them?



# 47

*Russia prays for Russia.* When the Bolsheviks were taking over and their determination to atheize Russia was clear, some of the most devout of the Orthodox rejected the notion of aid from the Christian West — on the grounds that we are as materialist in fact as the Communists in principle. ■ That way of judging in depth is one of a host of evidences that the abiding Russia has something the world needs. We seem to have reached zero in our hopes to bring Christ to our own world, though no tyrant forbids us. Could Russia, if the stranglehold were to relax? ■ I'm sorry the Church no longer calls us to pray for Russia daily.



# 48

*Martyrs of Uganda.* There are twenty-two of them, seventeen of the number young boys, who had been brought to the Court because the King was gluttonously homosexual. A handful were beheaded; most were burnt alive. I have read somewhere that their executioners were startled because there was no screaming, the victims singing in the fire — till their voices stopped one by one. ■ It all happened nearly a hundred years ago. They were beatified in 1920 and canonized in 1964. ■ With religion in the West so very corpselike, it may be just whistling to keep my courage up to wonder if the wind of the Spirit might not blow with new power out of Africa. Whether or not, the Christians of Uganda at least have twenty-two of their own to draw courage from.





THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

49

PAUL: ". . . that we may be delivered from  
*confused and evil men*" (2 Thessalonians 3:2).

*This may be the one solution!*

*The One Solution.* For St. Simeon Stylites, it was. Charlot went to Honolulu.



ROSH HASHANAH

50

*The Jewish New Year and  
Day of Judgment (Yom Hadin).*



As did our Father Abraham before us, we wish you all a happy New  
Year 5740!

