

LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Courier-Journal, Richford Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.

'Superstar' Questions

Editor:

With all the comments on Jesus Christ Superstar, there

remains a deep stirring question within me.

Have the fans discovered Christianity is not just another religion or code of ethics but a Life, a Person? This whole new dimension in their lives, if it has taken place, is part of a transaction, and that is step-

ping into Christ.

Because so many are hearing of this human portrayal of Jesus, is it leading them to understand the divine nature of Jesus also?

It is easy to be tricked into thinking that we are in control when something has a grip on us. Anything, even the most legitimate thing in life can become an idol. Do we possess our money, our property, our pleasures, our leisure time or do they possess us? When such things possess us, they have become idols.

Now, has Jesus taken possession of our thoughts, words and actions? For if He has, then He has become our idol and our possessions are under His control now.

Let us ask ourselves: is this popular record an evil that masquerades as righteousness? Or are lives being transformed into following His ways?

The worst of all evils is Satan masquerading in Jesus' name. For everyone who uses Jesus' name and does not live His life, crucifies His Spirit. Some do it with deliberate intent, others without deliberate intent, others without caring.

Margaret Adams
Huffer Road
Hilton

FR. ALBERT SHAMON Word For Sunday



Sunday's Readings: (R1) Is. 2:1-5. (R1) Rom. 13:11-14. (R3) Mt. 24:37-44.

Advent celebrates the coming of the Lord to us and invites us to come to the Lord. Four times the word "come" occurs in the First Reading. Isaiah depicts the spiritual pre-eminence of the religion that would go forth from Zion and loudly cries out, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!" (R1).

Paul preaches that the need to respond is urgent: "Now is the hour, salvation is closer than we think. The night is far gone" (R2). One day the devils in hell held a council to discuss strategies for drumming up business, which had been slackening off. One devil said, "Let's tell earthlings there is no God." Satan vetoed the suggestion. Another demon moved, "Let us go to earth and tell everybody not to worry, there is no hell." Satan said no one would buy that. A third proposed, "Let us go and tell mortals there's plenty of time to prepare for salvation — no need to hurry." "That's it," agreed the archfiend. "Go, tell man there is no need to hurry, tomorrow is time enough. This plan will work." Man's most dangerous delusion is to think there is plenty of time. Paul and Advent remind us that "Salvation is closer than we think."

Our Lord heightens the sense of urgency, by pointing to the suddenness of His coming, "like a thief in the night." In the days of Noah, the flood caught everyone unaware. History will repeat itself at the coming of the Son of Man, if we don't watch out. One field worker will be ready, his fellow-worker will not. One woman grinding wheat will be ready, her companion will not. "Stay awake, therefore," counseled Christ.

Our Lord's summons to wake from sleep evoked from Paul the imagery of night and day, darkness and light, found in the Second Reading. Sins, especially sexual ones, are committed in the darkness of night. "Cast off the deeds of darkness," Paul urged. When daylight comes, clothes are put on. "Put on the character and ways of Christ," he continued; "and let Christ's life in you be as visible to others as the clothes on you."

We cannot pass over the famous story of a man who really took these verses of Paul to heart. He was a young man, who had a saint for a mother. He made up his mind that Christianity was right and true. But in his heart and will, he could not break away from his sinful attachment to a woman. One day in the garden of his villa outside Milan, he wept and cried to God "How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?"

As he kept saying these things and weeping, he heard a child's voice from a neigh-

boring house chanting and repeating, "Take up and read; take up and read."

He wondered if this were some child's game. The thought of how St. Anthony was converted by the chance hearing of a Gospel passage came to him. He ran to the stone bench where moments before he had laid aside the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Took up the volume, opened it, and in silence read, "Not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual excess and lust, not in quarreling and jealousy, rather, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh" (R2).

He read no further, nor did he need to. "At the end of that sentence," he afterwards wrote, "a light of security poured into my heart and all the shades of doubt were scattered." At that moment Augustine was converted — later Bishop of Hippo and one of the most influential minds in the past 2,000 years.

This is one of the great sentences of Scripture. We sin because we make allowances for sin. Paul said, "Make no provision for the desires of the flesh. Don't give sin a welcome. Kick it off your doorstep and you won't have it in the house." That is what Augustine finally did. But oh what prayers his mother, St. Monica, had to say to win him that grace! Advent is a time our Mother, the Church, prays for all us sinners to come to the Lord before He comes. For it is later than we think!

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IT'S WORTH A TRY; ISN'T IT?



salvation and service

REVEREND MONSIGNOR EDWARD T. O'MEARA
NATIONAL DIRECTOR

ME, SUFFER IN ADVENT?

"Suffering is part of your training; God is treating you as his sons...if you were not getting this training then you would not be sons but bastards." Hebrews: 12:7

I call the above passage from Scripture an Advent Meditation because Advent, like Lent, is a penitential season. We may lose sight of a disposition towards sacrifice and suffering for, unlike Lent, we are readily caught up in the exuberating hustle-bustle of the weeks and days before Christmas.

Yet what other season of the year are we more aware of our blessings...the spirit of families together...and the joyous feeling of good will among people, even the "Scrooges" we all know?

What other time of the year do we open our hearts and our pocketbooks more to the poor, the sick, the orphan, and the loved one away from home? When else do we make such a special effort to wish others mirth and happiness?

We may not even realize the sacrifices — time, money, and energy — we make in the advent of Christmas: cards, gifts, wrappings, decorations, and food. These sacrifices are not thought of as "suffering" because they are done in a spirit of joy and genuine giving. Even if we may sigh with relief on December 26th we are happy to have "suffered through it."

Advent, then, could be called the "training period" for our celebration of the birth of the Son of God and the celebration of our own lives as sons of God. For isn't that what the anticipation, sacrifices, and the joyous spirit of Christmas are all about?

And it is in this Advent spirit of sacrifice that I beg you to share with your brothers and sisters in mission countries who do not know the happiness we know...who do not have enough food, clothes, or medicine...who do not know the joys of education, work, health, and warm homes...in short, who do not know relief from the poverty they must suffer all year 'round.

Your Advent remembrance for them will go immediately to Christ's missionaries bringing to the world's suffering-poor the joy, the hope, and the reality of Christmas. Your gift for them this Advent tells the world that Christ has come. He does live today; and we truly are brothers to one another — Sons of God!

Please let "Giving to the Missions" be your special Advent Sacrifice with the prayer that you and your family and friends will have a most blessed holiday season.

USE THE COUPON BELOW TODAY!

Please put the poor of the missions on the top of your "gift list." Clip the coupon below and send your generous sacrifice to me today. Gifts of old gold, jewelry, and unneeded insurance policies are also welcome. Remember, too, all donations to the Society are tax deductible and promptly acknowledged.

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