### Insights into Liturgy

## Mho Cares About the Parousia?

By FATHER BENEDICT EHMANN

Our Christian task in Advent is not to celebrate the Nativity, but the Expectation. The song of Advent is not Adeste Fideles, but O Come, Emmanuel.

If Advent is nothing but an anticipated Chiristmas we rob ourselves and (even worse) our children of the precious experience of "waiting for Christ," the Hebrew "listening to the experience, of prophets," the desert experience of John heralding the Lord's coming, the maternal experience of Mary pregnant with the Messiah.

Every Christian must be in the number of those who are waiting for Jesus, a waiting which is a deepdown inner eagerness for the promised Lord to come. We're grateful that he has come. We're joyful that he comes now. But we need to be eager for when he will come again + the Bridegroom af the door, ready to take us to his home in glory.

To make Christmas out of Advent is to arrest and strint our Christian growth: It's like wanting the It's being greedy for the harvest without the labor of the sowing

The Lord said, "Seek and you, shall find." Advent is the seeking time. He said, "Knock, and it shall. be opened." Advent is the knocking time. "O Come: O Come, Emmanuel." But the Nativity graces will fall on barren, thorny ground, without a genuine Advent to dilate us and prepare the ground of our being Isaiah yearned for "the earth to be opened up and bud forth the Savior." However there can be no opening up of our earth, if we make Advent topsy-turvy with Christmas.

Christmas is not a has-been story. only. It is now. It is still to be. In his famous: Christmas tale, Charles. Dickens summons up before Scrooge the miser the Spirit of Christmas Past, the Spirit of Christmas Present and the Spirit of Christmas To Come, Our little Pauper-King, born in the Bethlehem stable, told us before he returned to his Father, that he was going to return, and that all of us had better be waiting for him:

Only a few people were waiting

were the Messiah With the humility of Elizabeth, his mother, John indignantly disclaimed the attribution, "I'm not fit," he said, "even to loosen his sandal strap."

John portrayed Him like a judge separating good from bad as the wind separates wheat from chaff, that is burned. This approach

"The crowds asked, "What must

"Do what you're not now doing," answered John "Be concerned

Even the social outcasts; like tax-

Don't take advantage of

In a word the Messiah was coming to bring joy to men by teaching them, among other matters, to be good to one another.

When Jesus had left the earth, He

sent the Holy Spirit to effect love in

the hearts of men. As a stream

welling up from the earth, so love

originates not from something

outside man, but from a fountain of love within him—the Holy Spirit. That is why the saints of God, filled

with the Spirit, could love

everyone, independent of whether

Every time St. Paul described his missionary life; he insisted on the

many difficulties and obstacles he

encountered. When he wrote to the

Philippians, he was in chains. Yet

this letter is so redolent with joy:

that the second reading taken from

Advent to be called Caudete

Paul's insistence on his sufferings

was done to make it clear that his

joy depended not on circumstances

outside himself, but on the Spirit of

For this reason, joy in trial is precisely the sign of the Christian life that one is filled with the Holy

Spirit. The Christian is not joyful

once in a while. The real Christian

is always joyful. His joy is constant, because it is a joy in the Lord. "Rejoice in the Lord always!" (R1)."

or not they deserved it.

caused the Iniro

Sunday: Joy Sunday

God within himself.

about the poor."

people," John said.

ignited an immediate reaction.

for the Messiah when he came the John, Simeon and Anna, and those few other folks who were called the all the rest, it was business as usual, with nothing much expected, nothing more cherished in the heart than the hope to get rid of the bitter oppression of the Roman oc-

Jesus warned us it will be the same when he comes again. He will not be expected, except by the

Advent is to prepare God's People for the Second Coming. It is to rehearse us to become a "waiting" people It is to teach us how to live with Jesus now, so that

all the so-called Yuletide partying and hectic merchandising in the Advent weeks. We may fairly wonder how much, in all of this, lesus is being remembered, to say nothing of his being expected.

The Coming and Presence of Jesus among us is called the **Parousia**. This is a word consecrated by the long usage of the Church from the earliest days. Once conceived in the womb of Many and born in Bethlehem, the Son of God permanently involved himself in the destiny of mankind. This is his Parousia — not a once for-all kind of event, but a continuing one: It began in Nazareth when Mary said. 'Be it done to me

For each one of us, our entry into Jesus' Parousia was at Baptism, It moves forward in us, growing from nore to more in the measure of our daily waiting and welcoming in hope and prayer. It will arrive at its consummation on our dying day, when Jesus will reveal himself to us, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." It will be the Second Coming for each person, one by:

end of time, sooner or later, the Parousia will be consummated in glory and triumph. In that great Second Coming, the lambs will be separated from the goats, the wheat from the chaff. Jesus' kingdom will. be complete. He will present it to his Father: We shall reign with him for ever and ever.

### MISSION GIFT

A set of Mass vestments; hand-made by Mrs. Carrie La Delfa, was presented to Father Joseph Reinhart at a recent meeting of Court Our. Lady of the Cenacle, Catholic Daughters of America Father Keinnart: diocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, said the vestments would be sent to Kenya, Africa.



— Mary, of course, and oseph, Zachary and Elizabeth and Poor Ones (anawim) of Israel. For

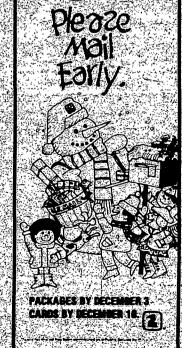
devout few, as of old. They will not be surprised, they will rejoice to see him, because they had always been waiting for him.

we may be ready to meet him then

However, all this is bound to be drowned out in the whoop-de-do of

according to your word." It continues through the ages, now and into eternity. It is a being with us, but also a being within us.

But then, for all the world, at the



### Right to Life To Show Film

A movie on euthanasia Who to Life Education Committee and Shall Surviver, is scheduled at a William Polito chairman of the light to Life meeting at 8 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 9 at the new Knights of Columbus hall, 670 Thurston Road:

William Polito, chairman of the Right to Life Political Committee, are scheduled speakers.

The meeting is open to the Mrs. Jeanne Sweeney of the Right public





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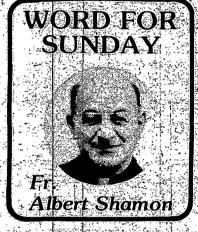
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Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk 3:10 collectors and soldiers, sought 18. (R1) Zep: 3:14-18. (R2) Phil 4:4 salvation. "What are we to do?"

Joy is one of the principal themes of Scripture God wills the wellbeing of all men

In the Old Testament joy emanated from having the basic securities of everyday living The joy of the harvest and vintage, the joy of the fraternal meal, the joy the fruitful wife brought to her husband the boisterous joys of the might owe its existence to a spring great Israelite feast days-all these were considered the blessings of God. But as Israel's faith matured she discovered that God does not always reward with temporalities. the securities men naturally seek, that trust in Him was preferable. And her joy deepened

When Israel's faith slackened and she returned to things for security, prophets arose to warn and to turn her to God. Zephaniah was such a prophet. His message, as a whole was terribly pessimistic, for moral corruption flourished in Israel From his prophecy, Thomas of Celano created the Latin hymn "Dies Irae" ("Day of Wrath") that used to be sung at funeral masses When King Josiah (640-609 B.C.) appeared, Zephaniah foresaw a religious reform in the making. So he called upon Jerusalem to rejoice: "Shout for joy, O daughter Zion!" (R1)

This sole joyful segment in the prophecy of Zephaniah was used by Luke as background for the Annunciation story (hence its inclusion in the Advent liturgy) The phrases, "Rejoice," "fear not,"
"The Lord is in your midst," are used almost verbatim by the angel Gabriel They foretell that no longer is joy to be situated in a city. but in a person: the Child of Mary!

From Him, joy radiated. At the Visitation, the child in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy. At His birth, angels caroled in heavenly song. In His public life, He rejoiced the sick. the possessed. Hence John's preaching was designated "good news."

People wondered whether John

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