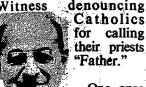
## Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

## It's the Spirit That Counts,

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mt. 23:1-12: (R1) Mal. 1:14-2, 8-10. (R2) 1 Thess. 2:7.9, 13.

Who has not been accosted by a Jehovah denouncing Witness Catholics for calling



One once stopped me to upbraid me for this

verbal "Why do you let people call-you Father," he complained. "After all, don't you know what Jesus

said - 'Do not call anyone on earth your father"?"

Not the Words Of course Jesus said that (in fact, in next Sunday's gospel). But Jesus also said, History has not known a man born, of woman greater than John the Baptizer." (Mt. 11:11) Yet Jesus Himself was born of woman. Surely He was greater than John. You see, as always, text out of context is pretext.

> Jesus' words about not calling anyone "father" were part of His attack on the Scribes and Pharisees. When the sect of Pharisees began, they were ardent champions of true religion. But, as time went on, their ardor waned; and at the time of Jesus, their religion had become hollow and they had become

abhorrent hypocrites, whose words were bold but whose deeds were few.

It is significant that the only one who ever called Jesus "Rabbi" was Judas; and the only ones who ever addressed Him as "teacher" were His enemies. (Mt. 8:19, 9:11, 12:38, 22:16)

Jesus never corrected them on this usage, for He was opposed not to titles, but to the attitude of those who sought them. I am sure you have heard someone retort like this when another tries to lord it over others, "Who does he think he is — God Almighty?" Well, the Scribes and the Pharisees acted as though they were God Almighty. They had drilled the Jews into paying deference to them: their spiritual fathers, their

rabbis, their teachers. In they set their authority above that of the prophets and God's written words. Not infrequently, their regulations actually nullified God's commands. (Mk. 7:13; Jn. 7:19-23) It was against this lopsided, topsy-turvy inversion of values that Jesus inveighed.

A similar situation has confronted us in the last two decades. How many teachings of the Church have been assailed in the name of "theologians." I've often said, "Don't quote the names of theologians to me when you wish to justify your rejection of a teaching of the Church." In such instances, I too would give counsel not unlike Christ's, namely, Avoid following a 'theologian' who does not follow the Magisterium of the Church.'

Jesus condemned not authority, but authoritarianism. condemned anything that threw up walls between God and men; that made religion an intolerable burden, not an uplift; that deified self, not God.

Jesus was not concerned with words, the letter of the law, but with the spirit. God Himself spoke of "Honor your father and your mother." The prophet in the first reading speaks of "the covenant of our fathers." So the Church does not forbid the term to be used of God's representatives today. For a priest is called "Father" not to glorify himself, but to remind us of the Father in heaven who gives divine life to His children at baptism.

### Blue Army

The monthly all-night vigil of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima will open at 9 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 3 at Holy Rosary Church. Father John P. O'Malley will conduct the first hour. Fathers John Poluikis and Frederick Helfrich also will lead devotions during the night. The vigil concludes with a 6 a.m. Mass celebrated by Father Robert Meng, pastor of the parish.

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#### Parish Sets **Sacraments** Workshops

Blessed Sacrament Parish will hold a workshop on the Sacraments Nov. 3 and 4.

Entitled Sacraments and Our Christian Life, the workshop is the first in a series of like events designed to update the parish's faith.

Msgr. William Shannon, professor of religious studies at Nazareth College, will speak Contemplation and Sacraments on Friday at 7:30 p.m. in the parish meeting

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Workshops will be held on Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon. Leading the workshops are Maier, pastoral t; Father John P. assistant; Father Norris, pastor; Father Thomas J. Valenti, associate; and Dr. William J. Sullivan, associate professor of Religious Studies at St. John Fisher College. The series is sponsored by the parish staff and the Adult Education Committee.

#### Glory of Yahweh

The Glory of Yahweh prayer group has scheduled three meetings for November. All are on Mondays, at 7:30 p.m. at Holy Name Church, Greece On Nov. 20, there will be a charismatic Mass and healing service, with Father David Simon as celebrant. Other dates are Nov. 13 and Nov. 27. For more information: 352-9037 or 436-

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