

# The Open Window

By FATHER HOHMAN

## An Answer To Father Paul Cuddy

To Father Paul Cuddy:

For reasons which I will cite below, I find it necessary to reply to your column in which you indicated that I was "bad mouthing" the Pope and the Church by my statement about injustice done to half the human race. The first thing I would like to bring up is my definition of "bad mouthing." To me, "bad mouthing" is imputing guilt to someone concerning something done or said. In no way was I imputing guilt to the Holy Father or to the Church in reference to the ordination of women. It was merely a statement of my opinion that what these people had by right of being children of God, baptized Christians, and heirs of the Kingdom, was being denied them. That opinion imputes guilt to no one. It is merely in opposition to a prevailing position.



The second point I would like to make is that it is my recollection that the question of ordination as it was brought up at the meeting of the Consultative Bodies had to do with the possibility of women's being ordained deacons. I may be wrong in that recollection, but I would like to state that the possibility of women's being ordained deacons is still open to discussion and is a very distinct possibility.

The final thing I would like to state is in reference to the reason why I answered you in the first place. You and several other priests in the diocese have frequently made the claim that you are defending the faith of individuals who are not able to defend themselves and who are being unduly disturbed by having their devotions and other practices of the past taken away from them or "put down." I would like to declare publicly to you and to the entire Church of Rochester that I feel a very important obligation to defend the rights of those who find in some of the practices or points of view something not essential to the Church's teaching, and intellectually unacceptable to them. Somewhere back in our history the possibility of Rome's making a mistake on any pronouncement was denied. Yet we know as a simple matter of fact that various Rome pronouncements have been in error. I think we deceive people badly by giving the impression that every papal statement carries the note of infallibility. I want to tell the people I'm talking about

that they still have a very real right to be a part of the Church and should stand up for what they believe. There is no need whatsoever for thinking of the Church as monolithic or absolute in its attitudes toward every subject. There is much room for disagreement and at the same time for compatibility. To refuse to buy into certain practices or devotions is not to deny their validity for other people. There is a valid distinction between non-acceptance and rejection.

You seem to be saying that to disagree with the Pope on whatever matter constitutes a kind of disloyalty. I personally deny that on the basis of the fact that for a man to disagree with his wife, or vice versa, in no way constitutes disloyalty to the spouse.

I realize that what you have done is to equate disagreement with rebellion. I am not aware of being disobedient to the Pope in any of my actions or policies. To state this by way of example, I may believe in the ordination of women as priests, but if I were a bishop I would never disobey the Holy Father by ordaining a woman a priest. I hope you can see the difference.

Why don't we come to a truce whereby you be the peaceful defender of people whose needs you perceive and I will be the peaceful defender of people whose needs I perceive. In that way, hopefully we can live together in mutual regard and charity.

## Peter and the Wolf

Six children from Public Television's ZOOM! perform in a new version of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf that is touring the area with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. The show will be on at 7:30 tonight at the Samuel L. Clemens Performing Arts Center in Elmira and in Medina and Batavia high schools on the next two evenings. On Dec. 16, there will be a 10 a.m. performance in Rochester's Eastman Theatre, and a 3:30 matinee at the Community College of the Finger Lakes in Canandaigua.

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## Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

### Render Constant Thanks

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Jn. 1:6-8. (R1) Is. 61:1-2, 10-11. (R2) 1 Thes. 5:16-24.

Advent is a time for meditation. I would like to share a meditation of mine on next Sunday's readings. Maybe I should call it "ramblings."



I sat in church with the missalette opened to the readings for the Third Sunday of Advent. After a short prayer, I started to read the Isaian passage, but I stopped at the very first line: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me." Isaiah wrote that about 520 years before Christ. I wondered of whom he was speaking—of himself or of another. But I ceased wondering, because I knew Jesus had applied these words to Himself.

I then pictured Jesus standing in the synagogue at Nazareth reading this same text. I could almost hear Him say, "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:18). The way Jesus said it got me thinking. He said it with such sureness,

almost exultantly. I tried to think more deeply. My mind ran back to the events just before this one; namely, His baptism and His temptations. The answers came. No wonder He was so sure: at His baptism He saw the Spirit actually come down upon Himself. And He could be triumphantly exultant for after that He tasted the power of the Spirit: it drove Him into the desert where He might see for Himself by His crushing the mighty temptations of Satan the power of the Spirit that was now His.

From there, I turned to the gospel, because the first and third readings illuminate each other. Another prophet, John the Baptist, pointed to Jesus, as Isaiah had. John called Him "the Light." How welcome light is in the darkness! John called himself "a voice" — only that! A messenger. Gosh, what humility, I thought! This man could have passed himself off as the Messiah. But no, "I am only a messenger." I thought, who pays attention to a messenger. The Western Union boy is tipped, routinely thanked and dismissed. The telegram, the message, is the thing that matters.

For years Ed McMahon has been Johnny Carson's "herald." Every night McMahon makes the night show exciting by giving Carson a buildup that ends

with "And h-e-r-e's Johnny!" When Carson comes on he takes over. There is no doubt Carson is the star and McMahon is there to make Carson look good. Such was his role, John said, regarding Jesus.

And because Jesus comes to save us all, His coming is shot through with joy. I went back to the Isaian passage and sure enough the prophet spoke of joy. "I rejoice heartily in the Lord." And why did Isaiah rejoice, I asked myself. Because the Lord clad His beloved in a robe of justice. I delighted in the way Isaiah described justice, as more beautiful than a bride's jewelry or a bridegroom's crown. But I wondered how he could say this — Justice seems so cold, so legal. Then I started thinking of how justice gives to each his own — to God atonement, to us reconciliation. As a consequence order results, and order gives tranquility, and the tranquility of order is peace, and white-winged peace is the desire of all mankind, as joy-begetting as a wedding.

Finally I glanced at the second reading. Paul too spoke of joy. "Rejoice," he wrote. Not just for a day, but "always." Imagine! How can we rejoice always in this vale of tears? "By praying," Paul said. "Pray always and you will rejoice always." And what response shall we make for this unceasing joy? "Render constant thanks." So, God wills us to be in Advent joyful, prayerful, thankful, Spirit-filled.

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