

# Word for Sunday

By Father Albert Shamon

## Advent Begins With the End

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Lk. 21:25-28, 34-36. (R1) Jer. 33:14-16. (R2) 1 Thes. 3:12-4:2.

The December missalette has this caption before the Advent readings: "Cycle C readings begin today." Almost everyone knows by now that the Church has a three-year cycle (Cycle A, Cycle B, Cycle C) for the Sunday readings. Each



Fr. Shamon Cycle C) for the Sunday readings. Each

cycle emphasizes one of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke. So starting this Advent the gospel according to Luke predominates (Cycle C).

Advent means "coming." Advent celebrates the three comings of Christ: in history (past); in mystery (present), and in judgment (future). It stresses that Christianity is founded on historical events, not philosophical theory, and that the heart of history is a Person — Jesus Christ. This Jesus who came once in history will come again at the end of time. However, in the interim, He is present in His Church and her sacraments — present so that His first coming will not

have been in vain and His second coming will be a joy.

This year I am going to switch from homily to instruction. I have homilized for the past 11 years. For the next three years, please God, I shall use the readings as springboards for much-needed instructions. Cycle B seems geared to sacraments; Cycle A, to commandments; Cycle C, to the great dogmas of our faith.

The first Sunday of Advent, for instance, begins with the end — Christ's second coming, in judgment. Ought we not at this time ponder on eschatology — the end things?

Man is born to die as the bird is born to fly. Death is the separation of soul and body. The body returns to the dust from which it is

formed. The soul is immediately judged — the Particular Judgment. "It is appointed that men die once, and after death be judged" (Heb. 9:27). This Judgment is self-judgment. As a body heavier than air, like a rock plunges earthward, and as one lighter than air, like smoke goes skyward, so the soul at death will of itself go to heaven, hell or purgatory, according to its state at death.

In purgatory it will stay 'til purified for heaven. In heaven or hell it will stay 'til the General Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). At that time the bodies of the dead shall arise to be reunited to their souls. The bodies of the good will be gloriously beautiful; those of the wicked, horribly ugly. The purpose of the General

Judgment will be to justify God's ways with men. So often God is blamed for the evils of life. In the Judgment all men shall see God's beautiful design for all men. After this Judgment there will remain only heaven and hell and eternity. Time will be no more.

Heaven will be love

without pain; hell, pain without love.

We are on trial now. The Judgment is but the pronouncement of the sentence. Therefore, Paul exhorts us to conduct ourselves in a way pleasing to God (R2). Our Lord urges us, "be on the watch... pray constantly" (R3).

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## The Open Window

By Father Louis J. Hohman

### Language Argument Irrelevant

Dear Readers,

As no questions came in this week I decided to ask myself a question. The question is this: what causes the Bishops of the United States to refuse to remove sexist language from various parts of the liturgy?

It has seemed just terribly strange to me that it should be so difficult for the leaders of our Church to move away from what is obviously a source of irritation for many in their flocks. The idea of sexist language — the use of the word men — is so easily and inconsequentially changeable that it is hard to imagine they would spend any time at all discussing it. For one thing, as the word men is used, it is not a masculine term. The English language is weak in that regard. The Latin word for man that designates his



Fr. Hohman

virility, is vir. The Latin word for a person, a human, is homo. There is no masculine designation in any of the uses of the word man in the liturgy except when they refer to the Lord Jesus as masculine, or some other masculine person. The argument is so out of place in terms of making decisions that it's difficult for me to understand why they are doing this.

With all due respect, I find it a reflection upon their training in a monastic setting where separation from women and isolation from them was very important in terms of developing a kind of celibate lifestyle. However, this has changed, and there is the realization that celibacy does not mean isolation from half the human race, but rather a very special kind of relationship. When that is understood more fully, perhaps we shall have no problem with arguments of this particular kind.

Also with due respect to the Bishops, a majority of them did see fit to approve the changes, but not the two-thirds majority that was required.

### THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER "A Time of Recovery"



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