

A Word for Sunday

Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 8:1-11; (R1) Isaiah 43:16-21; (R2) Philippians

For some people, the Bible is a book

For God's people, the Bible is a promise of future greatness. The Bible always points to the future — future

In the first reading, Second-Isaiah says, "Remember not the events of the past - these will pale in the light of what I am going to do for you.'

When Second-Isaiah spoke these words, the Jewish people were on the verge of giving up their faith in the Lord, for the Lord seemed to have forgotten them. They had been in exile, some for 50 years. They wept by the rivers of Babylon, and hung their harps on the willows. Gone was their temple, gone the magnificent Hebrew liturgy. They had been scattered among a cruel people. No king would now save harsh

At this moment, when the Jews were nearest despair, God spoke to them in words of exquisite beauty through a now-unknown poet, Second-Isaiah. His writing is called "The Book of Consolation" (Isaiah 40-55).

His words of unsurpassed splendor interpreted the long history of Israel as one great promise of future glory. The people listened to his words and became ever afterward a future-looking people. They awaited God's definitive intervention in history through His new Messi-

When the Messiah came, He focused the new Israel toward a new future -His Second Coming. At first, the early Christians looked for His coming within their lifetime. As years proved them wrong, they discovered the other part of God's future promise: the afterlife.

Since then, heaven has always been an important part of Christian teaching.

The story in Sunday's gospel hints at this teaching. The woman taken in adultery is forgiven by Jesus and then sent off to a happy future. Jesus in His healing mercy blots out her crimson past and frees her to build a new life, a new

It seemed that the future was what also steeled Paul to grapple with and conquer the present. "I wish to know Christ ... and how to share in His sufferings ... Thus do I hope that I may arrive at resurrection from the dead"

Paul, the sufferings of the present were as nothing compared with the glory to come. His whole attention was fixed on the finish line as he ran toward the prize to which God called

We know little about heaven. But Paul said, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians

When Hannibal was crossing the Alps and there was danger of discouragement among his soldiers, he kept reminding them, "Post Alpes, Italia" - after the cold Alps, the sunny clime of Italy with its fruited fields.

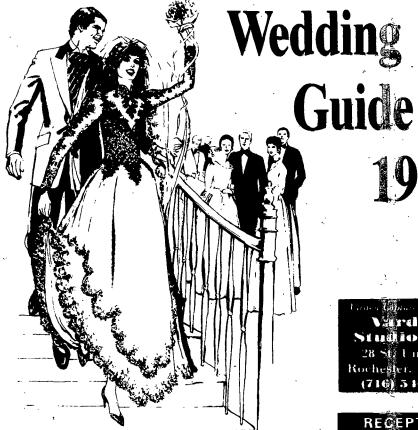
The great things the Lord has done for His people in the past are meant to prove His enduring love and strengthen our hope in the far greater things He will do for us in the future. And our hope in the future should spur us on to greater effort in the present. The intensity of our present interest in the Lord and the depth of our present love will somehow be the measure of our enjoyment in the life to come.

Weekend of Directed Prayer

A Weekend of Directed Prayer is being offered for lay and religious men and women in the Southern Tier at Mt. Saviour Monastery in Pine City. The weekend, which will provide a special time for prayer with individual diretion, will begin on Friday, April 18, at 7:30 p.m. and conclude on

Sunday, April 20, at 2 p.m. Reservations are limited and must be made by March 18. Contact Mrs. Joyce Trifoso, 341 Prospect Hill Rd., Horseheads, N.Y. 14845, or call (607)739-5580, evenings. A donation of \$50 is suggested.





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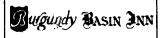
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