

Columnists

Memorial Mass given by son, Arthur Lench, for the repose of the soul of Rose Lench, his beloved mother who died Friday, November 18. Mass will be held Saturday, December 17, 1 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament, corner of Rutgers and Monroe. Main celebrant & homilist, Fr. Francis Blighon.

**Blessed Sacrament
13th Annual
Christmas Tree Sale**



546 Oxford Street
271-7240
Daily: 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Scotch Pine & Balsam Fir
Starting at \$6 - \$50



Cliff Hollenbaugh
WHITE HEARING AID CENTER
925 Sibley Tower Bldg.

**The Manhattan™
Circuit Automatic Signal Processor**

A hearing aid equipped with the Argosy Manhattan™ Circuit continuously monitors the environment and automatically adjusts your hearing aid to provide maximum comfort and intelligibility in noise and quiet. Let us help you discover a Custom In-The-Ear Hearing Aid, with the Manhattan™ Circuit! Also available in Canal aids.

454-3270

For over 25 years, we've been making our customers, our lasting friends.

Mon.-Fri. 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Evenings by Appointment

Golden Oldies Antiques

Buying • Selling • Appraisals
One piece or entire household



Specializing in: art, pottery, lamps & shades, oak furniture, post cards, sterling silver, toys.

466 Oxford St., Roch., N.Y. 14607
716-288-4115

The Shadee Lady
HOLIDAY WISH LIST

- Christmas Angels
- Stuffed Bears & Bunnies
- Hand Painted Accessories
- Stained Glass Mini-Lamps
- Potpourri Burners
- Brass Candlestick Lamps
- Hand made Baskets
- Christmas Stars
- Cranberry Glass
- Scherenschnitte
- Reproduction Oil Lamps
- Country Tin
- Finials
- Gift Certificates

Northfield Commons
Pittsford, N.Y.
716-385-7559
Tues-Fri 10-4
Thurs 11-8
Sat 10-4

Holiday Special

THIS WEEK
DEC. 7-DEC. 13

Suits & Sport Coats

20% OFF

CHECK OUT THE 50% OFF
TABLE DOWNTOWN

Whillock Bros.
TRADITIONAL CLOTHIERS

24 WEST MAIN STREET • 454-1816

Monday-Saturday 9:30-5:30

Valet Parking

235 PARK AVENUE • 461-2220

Mon-Sat. 10-6

Tues. & Thurs. 'til 9; Sun. 11-4

AMERICAN EXPRESS • MASTERCARD
VISA • WHILLOCK'S CHARGE

Repentance should outlast Christmas

By Father Albert Shamon

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 3:10-18; (R1) Zephaniah 3:14-18; (R2) Philippians 4:4-7.

When a rocket is launched into space, its principal source of thrust in takeoff from the earth is supplied by a booster rocket. We have seen those remarkable pictures of these booster engines breaking away from the main rocket after its fuel supply has been consumed.

John the Baptist was a sort of booster rocket to launch the ministry of Jesus. He appeared only briefly at the beginning — a kind of first-stage rocket to get things off the ground, blasting away with a message of repentance.

One of the Peanuts cartoon strips begins with a little girl friend commenting to Lucy, "Your mother says you're a natural-born fuss-budget." An indignant Lucy replies, "Natural-born nothing! My mother never gives me any credit. I've worked hard to be what I am!"

Most of us have worked hard to become what we are, so the notion of turning about-face is not very appealing. Only when we are unhappy with ourselves do we become candidates for repentance.

To repent means we've got to realize that the root of our troubles lies in ourselves. We all have problems and difficulties in life. Repentance starts when I begin to realize that I myself am the real problem. Suppose you are in trouble with your wife or children or colleagues at work or your boss. Our normal reaction is — it's their fault; who wouldn't have trouble with them?

To be repentant means once in a while to look back at yourself and discover what a difficult person you are, and to begin to understand how much your wife or children or colleagues at work or your boss has had to put up with you! Repentance means reversing the process for once, and blaming yourself instead of blaming others. When that happens, you will start to change.

The Greek idea of repentance is to change the mind, but the Hebrew concept involves a complete turning about so that you are facing in a different direction. Such a radical change in lifestyle is what John the Baptist had in mind. One is coming mightier than I to clear the threshing floor, to gather the wheat into barns and the chaff into unquenchable fire, he warned. The coming wrath can be avoided only by repentance, leading to the forgiveness of sin.

The impressed crowds asked what they must do to perform works worthy of repentance. They might have expected some exotic sacri-

A Word for Sunday

... fice, but they pretty well knew, as do we, what they had to do. When some people told Mark Twain there were many passages in Scripture they did not understand, Twain quipped, "What worries me are not the passages I don't understand, but those I do understand!"

So the Baptist spoke clearly. To the crowds he simply said, "Be neighborly, sharing your surplus with others." Later, someone put it this way: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

The tax-collectors — the greedy bunch who sold out to the Romans and were charging usurious rates — were told "to exact nothing over and above your fixed amount."

Soldiers came next to John. He did not condemn soldiering — only its evils: violence, extortion, discontent.

The message of John to us is that we too have many things to remove from our path as we prepare for Christmas. Greed and violence are still with us, as are drunkenness and sexual immorality, putting of self-interest before all other considerations, cheating in business and wages, and much, much more.

Repentance means to change direction, to remove our faults, not just for Christmas, but once for all.

Once Princess Margaret of England visited a British retirement home. You can imagine the excitement created when it was announced that royalty was going to have tea there. Elaborate preparations were made: cleaning, polishing, even landscaping the home. Pots and big tubs of blooming flowers and shrubs were placed all around the grounds the day before the princess arrived. The day after the event a truck came and took them all away again.

Christmas is kind of like that. We bring in all sorts of things for the event and the day after, it is all hauled away. Good will, cheer, joyous love for others, kindness to the less fortunate — the day after, it is back to business as usual. Repentance is more enduring.

Waiting for a second chance

By Cindy Bassett

"Zechariah, what is it?" my wife, Elizabeth, asked when I motioned for her to look out of the window.

It had been six months since I had uttered a word, and she knew when she asked the question that I could not answer her. But neither one of us had grown accustomed to my handicap — least of all me.

Elizabeth looked out across the fields in the direction I had indicated and saw a young woman approaching. "It's my cousin, Mary!" she cried as she ran from the house to greet her.

I watched as the two women greeted each other warmly and I heard Elizabeth say, "Somehow I knew you would come. You must have good news for me too, Mary. For my own child stirred in my womb with joy at the sound of your voice."

"Let's go in Elizabeth. I have much to tell you," Mary replied.

I smiled and waved to Mary as she entered. Elizabeth ushered her quickly to another part of the house, but not before I heard her say, "Sometimes even our greatest joy must be tinged with sorrow."

My ordeal began six months ago at a very happy time of my life. It was quite an honor to offer the sacrifice at the temple. It only happened once a year and I had been chosen by lot to serve. I was just about to burn the incense in the inner sanctuary when, in the dim light there, I thought I saw someone standing just to the right of the altar.

"Don't be afraid, Zechariah," the figure said. "For God has heard your prayer after all of this time. Your wife, Elizabeth, will bear a son. You are to call him 'John.'"

It seemed almost too good to be true. Now that my wife was well past child-bearing years, we both had given up hope of ever having children.

"How can I be sure of this?" I asked. "My wife and I are both old now."

"I am Gabriel and I was sent by God with this news," the angel replied. "And because you did not believe, you will be silent until this happens."

The Bible Corner

I heard Elizabeth and Mary coming back into the room. "Zechariah, Mary has wonderful news! The Messiah that we have waited for all of our lives is coming. An angel came and told Mary that she was chosen by God to bear his Son. His name will be Jesus!"

I was stunned and suddenly very ashamed of myself. Mary could never have understood everything that was happening. Yet, here she was, completely trusting her life to God. Instead of believing, I had questioned what seemed an impossibility to me. All I could do now was tell the Lord that I was sorry for my lack of faith, and wait.

Mary stayed with us for nearly three months. A short time after she left, Elizabeth gave birth to a baby boy just as the Lord had promised.

I still was unable to speak eight days later when we gathered with all of our relatives at the temple for the circumcision. Everyone there was certain that the baby would be named 'Zechariah.' But Elizabeth kept insisting on the name, 'John.' Finally someone brought me a writing tablet and I wrote the name 'John,' too.

Suddenly, I was able to speak again. I began praising and thanking God. There was much to be grateful for that day at the temple. And an even greater miracle was about to happen. My son, John, was going to be the prophet who would announce the coming of the Messiah to redeem God's people. For anyone who waits for the Lord with faith will never be put to shame.

Scripture reference: Luke, Chapter 1.

Meditation: "To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see," Hebrews 11:1.

ADVERTISING IS A NUMBERS GAME ...

AND WE'VE GOT THE NUMBERS!

Over 100,000 Readers Every Week

No newspaper knows for sure exactly how many of its readers will notice every advertisement, and of those who do see it ... how many will act upon it. But it's a pretty sure bet that the more people your ad reaches, the greater the chances your ad will be seen ... and the greater the likelihood for getting response; which is really what advertising's all about.

So Why Not Play The Odds ...

PLACE AN AD IN THE COURIER-JOURNAL AND WATCH IT PAY OFF!

For Advertising Information,
CALL: (716) 328-4340