

# Effort is needed to enter into salvation

By Father Albert Shamon  
Courier columnist

Sunday's readings: (R3) Luke 13:22-30; (R1) Isaiah 66:18-21; (R2) Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13.

The saying in Sunday's Gospel, following upon Luke's parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, stress two points: first, to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, great effort is needed; and secondly, the door to the Kingdom does not remain open indefinitely, so the time to enter is now!

While continuing His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus was teaching constantly about salvation. This teaching evoked the question: "Are only a few to be saved?"

Everyone expected Jesus to answer: "All Jews will be saved with the exception of great sinners, like the tax collectors."

But Jesus refused to speculate. Instead, He taught that every single person should "strive" (the Greek word means "to work like the devil") to enter into the Kingdom of God. He likened the Kingdom of God to a house with a narrow door — to indicate the great effort needed to get in.

The entrance to education, for instance, is a narrow door. It takes a lot of hard work and money to get an education. But a good education opens the door to limitless horizons. The more education you have, the greater your options. A young lad may choose the broad and easy way out. He may want to be free, so he quits school. At first it's great! No studies. Sleep late. Earn money. But as time passes on, he is consigned to that increasingly narrow band of jobs reserved for the unskilled.

If he had stayed with his studies just a little bit longer, if he had made it through the narrow door of education, he would have had a broad field of opportunity. If he still wanted to work at low-paying, unskilled jobs, he could. However, he would have the freedom to choose. Education is a narrow, hard door, but it leads to almost limitless horizons.

The same is true of physical fitness. How sad it is to see so many of our youth, strong, handsome, with bodies like Rambo, only to destroy them by entering the broad way of bodily abuse through exces-

sive drink, drugs, sexual promiscuity. What a piece of work is man!

Yet like any piece of equipment, the body must be properly used. To neglect it and follow the transitory whims of the flesh is to walk through a wide door that closes quickly, if one is not careful. Just reflect on the number of rock stars who have died before the age of 40 because they took the wide road inviting to momentary joy but ultimately leading to destruction.

Instead of entering the narrow door of fasting, self-denial, self-control, so many of our young become couch potatoes — eating too much, drinking too much, "playing around" too much. Self-discipline may seem hard and narrow, but it leads to a fruitful life here and to the wide horizons of life eternal hereafter.

Our Lord said, "Try to come in through the narrow door." At first it may seem hard. Sacrifices may be demanded. Grace is free, but it isn't cheap. It costs. But if you pay the price, the payoff will be exceedingly great!

But the other point Our Lord made is,



## A WORD FOR SUNDAY

the narrow door is not open forever. God has eternity, but we have only time. Time runs out. So now is the acceptable time. When the feast in God's Kingdom begins, the door is shut. Then it will be too late to seek admission. It will be of no use to plead that we knew Jesus. Knowledge means nothing. The determining factor is, did we enter the narrow door? Did we respond to His message?

On that day there will be no automatic admissions, based on privilege: "I'm a Jew," or "I'm a Catholic." Entrance through the narrow door is not achieved by birth or by accident of belonging. Those who thought they would be first in the Kingdom will discover to their astonishment that they are last, and their places taken by others from every nation (R1).

What is important is to make the effort to repent, to turn totally to God and to do this, not tomorrow, but now!

## Watson Homestead sponsoring six seminars for clergy and laity

Experiential theology, creative preaching and the prophetic theology of Elijah and Elisha are some of the continuing-education programs being sponsored by Watson Homestead Conference and Retreat Center.

The center will offer six programs for clergy and laity through the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1990. The courses are:

- Oct. 6-8 — "The Elijah-Elisha Stories: An Introduction to Prophetic Theology from the Third World." Dr. Noriel Capulong, professor of biblical studies at Silli-

man University, Dumaguete City, the Philippines, will examine the Bible's Elijah-Elisha narratives and their historical-sociological dynamics. The session is cosponsored by Auburn Theological Seminary and Watson Homestead.

- Oct. 18-20 — Professional Development Planning Retreat. Father James P. "Pat" Carlisle, director of the Center for Professional Development in Ministry, Lancaster Seminary, Lancaster, Pa., will direct. Materials will help planners clarify roles, evaluate individual abilities, characteristics and knowledge, and learn a process for future planning.

- April 2-5, 1990 — "Experiential Theology." The Rev. Kenneth J. Mitchell, a United Methodist minister, will explore the relationship of theology to personal,

group and corporate experience.

- April 30-May 3, 1990 — "Shalom: Ways to Wholeness in a World of Brokenness and Birthing." Dr. Howard Clinebell, professor emeritus of pastoral psychology and counseling at the School of Theology, Claremont, Calif., and founder of the Institute for Religion and Wholeness at the School of Theology, will lead participants through a series of topics designed to enhance healing, wholeness and wellness in relations and in personal and professional life.

- May 14-17, 1990 — "The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring." Parker Palmer, an independent writer, teacher and activist in the areas of religion, education and social change, will direct. The course is for active

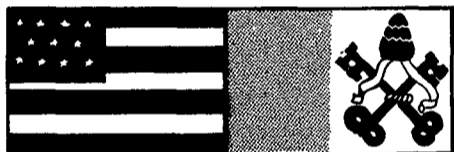
people who value creativity but seek to avoid the frenzy that activity brings.

- May 21-24 — "Preaching Creatively In a Mass Media Age." Thomas H. Troeger, professor of preaching and parish ministry at Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Bexley Hall/Theological Seminary, will explore theological and practical issues for sustaining the long-term development of preaching ministries.

Continuing-education units are available to clergy who participate in the course. Limited financial aid is available.

For information and a registration form, write: Watson Homestead Conference and Retreat Center, RD 2, Box 168, Dry Run Road, Painted Post, NY, 14870.

### Delivery problem sidelines column



### ON THE RIGHT SIDE

We have been experiencing some difficulties with regard to the delivery of Father Paul J. Cuddy's popular column. Whether due to mail delays or some other cause, for the past few weeks the column has been arriving at our office just before the paper was to go to the printer. This week, however, the column failed to arrive by press time on Tuesday, Aug. 22. We regret the inconvenience to readers and hope to have the problem resolved by next week.

### SHARED LIVING

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### Liturgy classes scheduled

The diocesan Office of Liturgy has announced three fall workshops. From Sept. 6-Oct. 4, the office will sponsor two pastoral-liturgy courses. The first, "Level I: the Order of the Mass," will be held at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester. The second, "Level III, the Rites," will be held at St. Mary Our Mother, Horseheads. Both classes will meet from 7-9 p.m. weekly.

On Sept. 9, the office will offer two simultaneous sessions of "Sights and Sounds of Advent/Christmas/Epiphany," one at St. Helen's Church, Rochester, and one at St. Catherine of Siena Church, Ithaca. Both programs will run from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Cost for the pastoral-liturgy classes is

\$25 per person. For the Christmas season program the cost is \$5 per person or \$25 per parish group of five or more.

Preregistration is required at least five working days before the classes or programs. To register, call 716/328-3210.

### Autumn trip planned

ROCHESTER — Holy Name of Jesus Parish, St. Martin's Way, has scheduled a fall foliage tour and spiritual reflection in Vermont from September 25-28.

Deacon Richard Lombard will conduct the tour, which is being sponsored by Fun People. Participants will take part in liturgies and public prayer services at the Weston Priory, and will also spend some time sightseeing in the Green Mountains.

For information, call Joan I. Perna at 716/865-9548.



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### School group plans sale

AUBURN — St. Mary's Home School Association will present a community flea market and rummage sale Saturday, Sept. 23, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

Anyone interested in a space at the flea market should contact Shelly Hovey at 315/255-1886. Donations for the rummage sale may be dropped off at St. Mary's School on Clymer St. between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.



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