

All do not enter the city of God

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 14:23-29; (R1) Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; (R2) Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23.

The second reading's passage from Revelation is a beautiful image of a city that has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God is its light and the Lamb is its lamp.

Light was the first thing God created. Aside from moles, earthworms, and criminals, living things are attracted to light. Light turns us on. The Psalmist says, "The Lord is my light." Jesus called Himself "the light of the world."

God shines on people for their own good. He enlightens their minds, cares for them, and lights up their way. Jesus was the light, says John, who shone in the darkness, illuminating the way to salvation. We are to walk by that light.

A man was about to cross a street, when a woman pulled his arm. "Look at the red light." The man

replied rather weakly, "But the other people are going across." She answered, "Don't look at them. Look up at the light and follow it."

The man said later on that was darn good advice. It put everything in a nutshell. Are we getting our walking signals in life from God, or from the herd? Are we breaking his laws to keep in step with the others?

The vision of the city of God was shown to John so that he might tell Christians about it, so that they might patiently endure the trials and persecutions under the cruel Domitian. It was a city of scintillating beauty, secure behind massive walls, vast enough to encompass peoples of all nations, races, and tongues — a city of eternal joy. Therefore, a city worth every trial and tribulation to live.

The most important thing in life is not to get into the country club, Harvard, Congress, or even the White House. The most important thing is to get into the city of God.

This is not as easy as one might

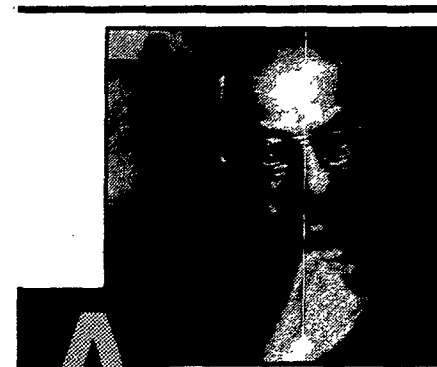
think. Of course, it is no trouble getting into church, but that is not the equivalent of getting into the city of God. "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of Heaven." And yet the most important thing in the world is to get into the city of God.

In the same passage, John says, "Nothing unclean will enter it, nor any(one) who does abominable things or tells lies. Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rv. 21:27).

Three categories of people are prohibited from entering the holy city. First, the unclean or profane, the secularist and materialist in contrast to the God-fearing and God-serving.

Second, those who commit abominations, who defile themselves — the temples of God — by loathsome sins of impurity: masturbation, contraception, abortion, homosexuality.

And lastly, the liars, not those who simply tell lies, but those who live a lie, the hypocrites — vice par-



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

ading as virtue.

"Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." These are people who have kept the robe of their baptism white, without serious sin, because of the blood of the Lamb received devoutly in life.

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