

Assumption reaffirms God's love

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) John 6:51-58; (R1) Proverbs 9:1-6; (R2) Ephesians 5:15-20; **Assumption Readings:** (R3) Luke 1:39-56; (R1) Revelation 11:19-112; (R2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-26.

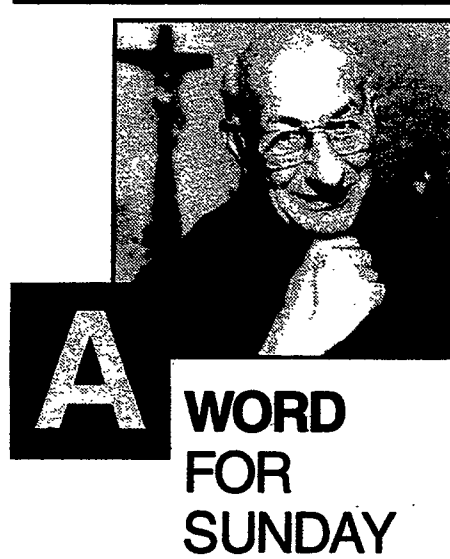
EDITOR'S NOTE: Father Shamon's column this week deals with the readings for the Feast of the Assumption, and not with the readings slated for Mass on the 14th Sunday of ordinary time.

The Assumption means that Our Lady was taken up body and soul into heaven after her death, that her body did not see decay or corruption. This doctrine is a dogma of our faith defined by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

The doctrine of the Assumption of Our Lady rests upon two solid philosophical principles: the power of love and the power of life. The Assumption affirms the power of love.

St. Thomas said that one of the effects of love is ecstasy. In ecstasy, one is lifted out of his body. Sometimes writers, poets and orators may experience mild forms of this when they "are carried away by their subject."

Sometimes an effect of love is levitation. St. Catherine of Siena was of-



ten raised from the ground while praying; love literally swept her off her feet.

Divine love, like fire, burns upward; love is basically a vehement desire to become one with the beloved.

We are familiar with the law of gravity, which draws bodies heavier than air to the earth. The closer a body is to the earth, the stronger is the gravitational force or pull toward the earth exerted on it.

There is another gravitational law:

a spiritual law of gravity, which attracts the heart of man to God Himself. The purer one's heart, the stronger the attraction to God. St. Paul longed to be dissolved from his body that he might dwell with Christ. For him, to die was to gain.

Imagine the intense love of God for Mary and the intense love of Mary for God. She died of love. As harp strings burst asunder with the music they throb to express, so Mary's heart broke of love. Add to this the fact that Mary was immune from all sin, which alone can lessen one's attraction to God. Thus, it is reasonable to see that her life of love had to end in an ecstasy that lifted her body and soul out of this world.

Secondly, the Assumption affirms the power of life. The enemy of life is sin; the wages of sin is death.

Sin is divisive. Sin brought division into the world. Sin divided man from God; after our first parents sinned, they hid themselves from God. Sin divided man from man; thus Cain killed Abel. But worst of all, sin divided man in himself; the flesh lusts against the spirit. And a house divided against itself cannot stand. Therefore the climax of sin is death — the division of soul and body. The climax of death is

corruption; the division of the body into its component parts. "You are dust and unto dust you shall return."

In Mary there was no sin. That is what the Immaculate Conception means. No sin, therefore no division. No division, therefore no death. No death, no decomposition.

Yet Mary did die; she died for the same reason her Son died: to help redeem the world. But her Son did not let His own body decay, nor would He let His mother's body decay. No man would destroy the house in which he is born if he could prevent this. Christ could, therefore He did prevent it. Thus He kept the commandment, Honor your father and your mother.

Our Lord ascended into heaven. He did this, the Bible says, to make intercession for us. "He liveth always to make intercession for us." Likewise, Mary was assumed into heaven so that she also might live to make intercession for us.

The doctrine that follows Mary's Assumption is that of Mediatrix of all graces. Mary was taken to heaven body and soul so that she might be truly a mother to us — not only giving us life in giving us Christ, but also in preserving that life by praying for us.

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