

Time is precious coin to buy eternity

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 13:24-32; (R1) Daniel 12:1-3; (R2) Hebrews 10:11-14, 18.

A little bit of apocalypse and a little bit of advice can be found in Sunday's Readings.

The last book of the Bible used to be titled Apocalypse; now it is called Revelation. For that is what apocalypse means — a revelation, an unveiling of what is to come.

Apocalyptic literature differs from prophecy in that apocalypse generally uses coded language, for it originated as underground literature in times of persecution. The book of Daniel (R1), for example, was written during the terrible persecution of Antiochus (167-164 B.C.) to strengthen and comfort the Jewish people in their ordeal. The persecution is described as "a time unsurpassed in distress." The author of Daniel promises that Michael, Israel's guardian angel, shall arise and put an end to the persecution — "your people shall escape."

As for those who had already died



A WORD FOR SUNDAY

for the Law in the persecution, the author makes the first explicit mention of resurrection after death. He says that "they shall awake and live forever in glory." Their persecutors, on the contrary, shall be an everlasting horror and disgrace.

So what is the advice? "Be faithful until death" — the Alleluia verse. One thing people must never do is to despair. In other words, apocalyptic lit-

erature is hopeful literature. Four times in the Responsorial Refrain we say: "Keep me safe, O God; you are my hope."

The 13th chapter of Mark's Gospel is also apocalyptic literature. In addition to being coded literature to escape the enemy censors, apocalyptic literature had another characteristic. For instance, Gothic novels such as "Dracula" stories, all have the same trappings: a moon-less night, winds howling, wolves baying, a castle in ruins, surrounded by a dark forest, a black stagecoach speeding through the woods, driven by an eerie coachman hunched and garbed in black. You expect all that in a "Dracula" movie.

So, apocalyptic literature always had cosmic fireworks: you can expect the sun to be darkened, the moon lightless, stars falling, and the heavens shaken, for apocalyptic literature deals with end-times: the end of a persecution or the end of an evil world.

Still, apocalyptic literature is hopeful literature, a story meant to give hope to suffering Christians. After trials of many sorts, then it will happen:

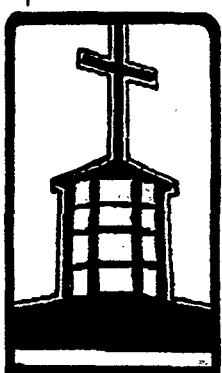
the Son of Man will come in the clouds with great power and glory. He will dispatch his messengers and assemble his chosen from the four winds. Why? To usher them into glory with Himself.

So, the same piece of advice: be faithful until death. Being faithful is more than a call to constant vigilance; it means making the maximum use of the time God gives us.

In the movie, "The Dead Poets Society," Robin Williams, portraying an English teacher, takes his class into the hall to the trophy case. There he shows them pictures of the past heroes of the school. "All of these young men were as you today," he tells them. "starting life with great promise. All of you will someday be as they are. They're all dead and so you will be. What do you think they would say to you? Get up close to the glass."

As the class leans toward the glass, Williams, in a raspy voice, says, "Carpe diem ... carpe diem." Seize the day!

Time is the precious coin God gives us to purchase eternity. Use it wisely. Use it now. Carpe diem — seize the day, for the night comes when no person can work.



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If you correctly identify the advertisers in this week's *Puzzle* your entry will be placed in a random drawing for one of seven \$20 gift certificates redeemable at one of the Society of Historic Landmark Restaurants: The Clark House, Crystal Barn, Daisy Flour Mill, Edwards Restaurant, Richardson's Canal House, The Rio or The Spring House.

Winners will be notified by mail and their names will be published in next week's Catholic Courier. Prizes will be awarded by random drawing of correctly completed puzzles received by Tuesday, Nov. 8th. No purchase necessary to win. Only one entry per person, please. Employees of the Catholic Courier and their immediate families are not eligible.

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Winners from Nov. 3rd were Verna Guarino, Rochester; Florence Sprague, Dansville; M. Mazurowski, York; Jane Pfeifer, Rochester; Ted Gall, Penfield; Helen Vorndran, Rochester; and Kerry Hartman, Palmyra.

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