

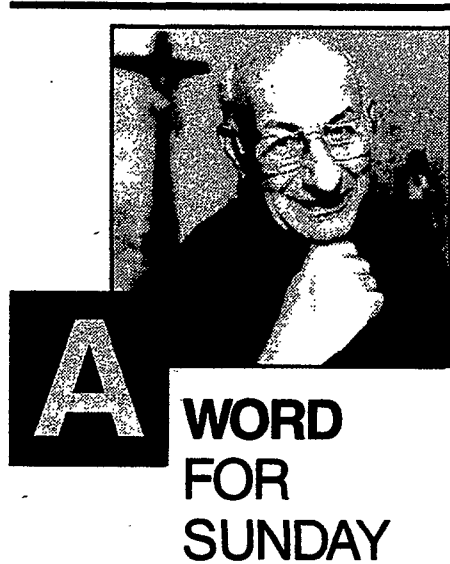
Advent is time to prepare for salvation

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Luke 3:1-6; (R1) Baruch 5:1-9; (R2) Philipians 1:4-6, 8-11.

Four great figures dominate the Advent season: David, Isaiah, John the Baptist, and Mary, the Mother of God. This Sunday and next, the focus is on John the Baptist, whose message is clear: "Make ready the way of the Lord."

Back in the days of the Babylonian empire, when a monarch traveled through his dominions in his slow and simply constructed chariot, sappers — or engineer soldiers — were accustomed to travel in advance to build the road on which the king had to travel. Later, Persian monarchs ordered the construction of a fine network of royal roads that led to the far ends of their kingdom. But Babylonia did not possess such roads in 540 B.C. so these sappers, in a primitive sort of way, had to level the hillocks and build up the ditches and fill in the holes so that the royal chariot might make some kind of speed.



WORD FOR SUNDAY

Isaiah, with this picture in mind, presents the image of the Messiah coming across the deserts and hills between Babylon and Palestine. The four evangelists picked up this image of road builders in introducing Jesus' ministry. Thus, John the Baptist becomes the sapper preparing the way of the Lord when he says "make ready the way of the Lord."

The command to "make ready" means to push obstacles out of the way; clear a straight path means "no detours;" every valley shall be filled — no goings up and down; and every mountain and hill shall be leveled — no going around them; the windings made straight — a direct route; and the rough ways smooth — potholes filled.

In other words, level the mountains of pride; fill up the valleys of discouragement and despair with joy and hope; and make straight the crooked paths of sin by saying a good confession.

What is the result of all this road building? The King will get through "and all mankind shall see the salvation of God."

Much can sidetrack us at this time of year. Many folks miss the true meaning of Christmas because of these distractions. John the Baptist comes on the scene engineering a straight path to God's Kingdom. No time to waste; don't get detoured. That's the way God comes cutting through the world's chaos.

Suppose you were given eight hours to chop down an enormous tree? If

you're like most people, you probably would grab your ax and swing furiously with all your might for eight hours straight. Abraham Lincoln said he would do something different. He said, "If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six of the eight hours sharpening my ax." A dull ax demands much strength; a sharp ax saves strength. Lincoln was not referring merely to axes and trees, however, but to preparation in every area of life.

Advent is our ax-sharpening time, a time to pray, to meditate, and to prepare for the commemoration of the greatest event in the world's history — salvation. "Make ready the way of the Lord."

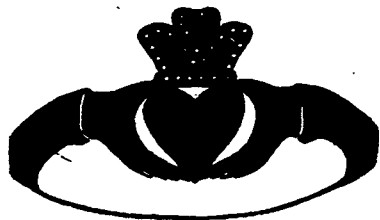
December is a maze for so many people. It's tough to find one's way through this season. Turning this way and that we keep banging into dead ends. We're exhausted well before Christmas. The trick is to know where we're going and why. The Lord's path takes one through — straight through.

When the shepherds went to Bethlehem, "they went with haste." They made a straight path to the manger. It's really the only way to go.

Christmas Gift Guide



Claddagh for Christmas!



- RINGS/EARRINGS
- PENDANTS
- CHARMS
- TIE TACKS
- BRACELETS
- ORNAMENTS

Irish Import Shop
3821 West Ridge Rd
225-1050

Irish & Celtic Imports
Packett's Landing-Fairport
223-9070

- 1994 Silver Eagles \$7.95
- 1994 Proof Sets \$13.95
- 1 oz. Merry Christmas Silver Bars \$7.95



Quality Diamond Bracelets
2 ct. \$995 3 ct. \$1595

Loose Diamond Liquidation!
100's to choose from. Call for quotes

Tower Coin & Stamp Exchange
Specialists in U.S. & Foreign Coins... John Bauer
3400 Monroe Ave. Pittsford Colony Plaza • 546-3810
Mon.-Fri. 10-5, Thurs. 'til 7, Sat. 10-2, and by Appointment

KEEPING CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS!

The Kneeling Santa

Join the "Kneeling Santa" praising the Holy Infant on Christmas Eve and capture the true meaning of Christmas.



4" Statue (pictured) **\$22.50**

Musical statue (not pictured) **\$34.95**

\$3.00 OFF WITH THIS COUPON

the regular \$8.25 retail price. of The Kneeling Santa Ornament from Roman's and Logos Bookstore. (2" Ornament not pictured) while supplies last. Coupon expires 12/24/94.

LOGOS BOOKSTORE
MUSIC • GIFTS • CARDS

THE STREET OF SHOPPES
1600 Ridge Road West
(716) 663-5085

1-800-755-6467

MAIL ORDERS WELCOME

PERSONALIZED Children's Books



- FREE Color Brochure • 42 Titles from \$9.95 • Shipping Available
- My Book of Prayers • Noah
- The Story of Christmas • Baby
- God's Special Gifts to Me • Golf

392-6779

FREE Santa Letter with Every Book!!!

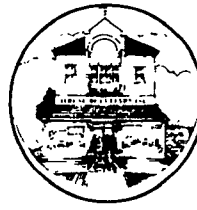
CALL TODAY FOR THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS PRESENT
Presto Print Books • 12 Shoreway Dr., Rochester, NY 14612

SAVE UP TO 70%

CHRISTMAS SPECIALS AT THE GREAT HOUSE OF GUITARS

THE WORLD'S...LARGEST MUSIC STORE

- YAMAHA KEYBOARDS FROM \$27
- CASIO KEYBOARD MT 140 WITH PCM TONE BANK-\$49
- CASIO MT 205 WITH 2,916 PERCUSSIVE SOUNDS-\$59
- ROCK CONCERT T-SHIRTS - \$3.99-\$10.99
- POSTERS - \$3.99
- HARMONICAS - \$5 UP
- SETS OF STRINGS OR PAIRS OF DRUMSTICKS - \$3
- FREE TAKING PRIDE IN ROCHESTER CD with \$35 purchase



GUITAR & KEYBOARD SALE

- LARGE SELECTION IN THE \$59 TO \$200 RANGE
- GIBSON ELECTRIC GUITARS - \$299 up
- NEW GIBSON LES PAUL GUITAR - \$499
- GIBSON EPIPHONE ACOUSTIC GUITAR - \$149

LARGEST SELECTION-LOWEST PRICES

- FREE ELECTRONIC TUNER WITH ANY IBANEZ GUITAR PURCHASE
- FREE AMP WITH ANY GIBSON GUITAR PURCHASE

- PEAVEY PREDATOR AMERICAN MADE ELECTRIC GUITAR - \$195
- FENDER NEW STANDARD STRATOCASTER ONLY \$249
- FENDER AMPS - \$29 up
- DRUM SET - \$299 & up

MOST CDs \$3.98 to \$12.98 ea.
MOST NEW TAPE, LP RELEASES \$6.98, \$7.98 ea.

FREE MUSIC LESSON AND FREE H.O.G. T-SHIRT WITH ANY INSTRUMENT PURCHASE

Cool Gift Certificates 544-3500

266-9584

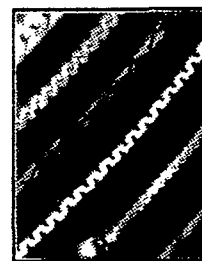
645 TITUS AVENUE

OPEN MON-SAT 10am-9pm, SUN 12 noon-6pm

GIFTS GALORE



40-60% OFF
14KT. GOLD CROSSES AND RELIGIOUS MEDALS



60% OFF
14KT. ITALIAN GOLD CHAINS



40% OFF DIAMONDS

During the Holidays Save an Additional 10-35% OFF!

STOP IN TODAY - LAYAWAYS ARE WELCOME

The SOURCE

Hours: Mon.-Fri. 10-9, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 12-5

EAST ROCHESTER MALL 381-5719
3300 MONROE AVE.
(LAZERS BLDG.) 586-9145
535 RIDGE RD. WEST 621-6280