

Be penitent during Advent

2nd Sunday of Advent (December 8): (R3) Mark 1:1-8; (R1) Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; (R2) 2 Peter 3:8-14.

Advent is the season of preparation for the coming of Christ, and the best preparation is the forgiveness of sins through confession.

Advent is a time for us to be honest. Sometimes we complain that God seems far away from us. The truth is very often it is we who are far away from God. God is truth, yet so many live by deceit. God is light, yet so many prefer darkness to light.

Advent is a season of penitence. For all sins there is forgiveness.

Many years ago in India, a group of men found a seriously wounded man lying beside the road. They carried him to the Christian mission hospital. A physician, seeing the man was an Afghan, said, "For him we have a bed."

The physician examined the man and found that his sight was imperiled. The man pleaded with the doctor to restore his sight so he could find his attacker and exact retribution.

The doctor told the man that he was in a Christian hospital, that Jesus had come to show us how to love and forgive even our enemies. The man told the doctor that Jesus' words



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

about forgiveness and love were nice, but meaningless. Revenge was the only goal, the only reality.

The doctor told the man a story about a person who took revenge: Long ago the British government had sent a man to serve as envoy to Afghanistan, but as he traveled to his new post, he was attacked by a hostile tribe, accused of espionage and thrown into prison. There was only one other prisoner, and the men suffered through their ordeal together — poorly clothed, badly fed and mistreated cruelly by the guards.

Their only comfort was a Bible, which the envoy's sister had given him. She had inscribed her name along with a message of good will. This book served the men as a source for their prayers and a diary to record their daily experiences.

The two were never heard from again. Twenty years later, a man browsing through a second-hand shop found the Bible. Reading some of the journal entries, he sent it to the sister whose name was in the book.

The last entry, in different handwriting, said the two had been publicly flogged and forced to dig their own graves before being executed.

The sister knew she would exact revenge — Christian revenge. She marshaled all the money she could and sent it to a mission hospital with the instruction to keep a bed free at all times for a sick or wounded Afghan. The doctor said, "You are now lying in that bed. Your care is her revenge."

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

DAILY READINGS

Monday, December 9
Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4;
Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12;
Luke 1:26-38

Tuesday, December 10
Isaiah 40:1-11; Ps 96:1-3, 10-13;
Matt 18:12-14

Wednesday, December 11
Isaiah 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10;
Matt 11:28-30

Thursday, December 12
Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation
11:19A, 12:1-6A, 10AB; (Ps)
Judith 13:18BC, 19
Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47

Friday, December 13
Isaiah 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4, 6;
Matt 11:16-19

Saturday, December 14
Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Ps 80:2-3,
15-16, 18-19; Matt 17:9A, 10-13

Loves me. Loves me not.



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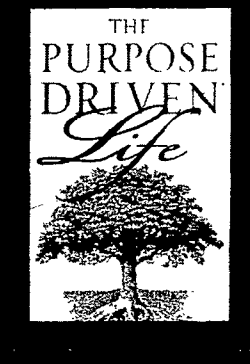
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