

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 3, 2017

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: IS 2:1-5, PS 122, MT 8:5-11

TUESDAY: IS 11:1-10, PS 72, LK 10:21-24

WEDNESDAY: IS 25:6-10A, PS 23, MT 15:29-37

THURSDAY: IS 26:1-6, PS 118, MT 7:21,24-27

*FRIDAY: GEN 3:9-15,20, PS 98, EPH 1:3-6, 11-12, LK 1:26:38

SATURDAY: IS 30:19-21,23-26, PS 147, MT 9:35-10:1,5A,6-8

NEXT SUNDAY: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT-RDGS: IS 40:1-4,9-11, PS 85, 2PT 3:8-14, MK 1:1-8

**HDO-MASSES 7AM/NOON/5PM*

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY:ROY AYERS

TUESDAY:FR. BERT WOOLSEN

WEDNESDAY: JIM RUMPZA

THURSDAY:DEC. MEM. OF LEGION OF MARY

FRIDAY: 7AM-JIM RUMPZA

NOON-KATHY LESTER/5PM-FOR THE PARISH

VIGIL:PAUL & ANN HENCKT

7:30:CHARLIE & CATHERINE SPITZNAGLE

10:00:MARJORIE YOUNG

NOON:FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Those serving in our Armed Forces, especially those soldiers who have connections to our parish: (Greg Yantis, Jason Beurkle, Emma Watson & Michael Chase). Garrett family. (Bob Bennett, Luke Spitznagle & Dick Livingston). Margaret Ruppert. (Charles Connor & Lori Cummins). Farrell & LaGuire families. Ann Hubertz. (Thomas Morlan & Sherry Switzer). Kathleen & Joe Duffy. Paul Hant-horn. Donald Springgate, Jr.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'

We've become quite accustomed to hearing this kind of language this time of year, perhaps too accustomed. What will it take to keep us in a constant state of "watchfulness" when it comes to our spiritual lives? How will we remain vigilant to the things which are likely to stand in our way of pursuing the Kingdom and its righteousness? (Mt. 6:33). Once again we focus our attention on the three pillars of the interior life, prayer, fasting and works of mercy. We should understand by now the role each one plays but just as we are likely to become too accustomed to "watchfulness" language we are likely to dismiss this helpful piece of information as well. The first thing to be gained by being watchful and remaining alert to the things God wishes us to know and always keep at the forefront of our minds. Remember the works the Lord has done (Ps. 105) is an encouraging reminder of how we are to live. This is not a focus on the past since if we are aware of what the Lord HAS done we will inevitably be ready to benefit from what the Lord IS doing. Therefore, prayer is the means by which we keep the memory alive and the present prepared to the works of the Lord. We encounter each time we open Scripture the works of God within the history of his people and this God still works among us today. Prayer makes us sensitive to that work. Fasting allows us to order our days aright (Ps 90:12). In doing so we take all the things that make up our lives and put them in the order in which they are likely to contribute to our work in seeking and building for the Kingdom. Fasting allows us to use wisely the things God has given us and provides us with that treasured role of steward whereby we take care of things until the Master's return. (Lk. 12:35-40). And as for works of mercy, here we find the only way to be "discovered" when the Master does return. Did you not know I must be about my Father's business (Lk 2:49) replies Jesus to his distraught parents. In the same way we can be found focusing on precisely what this "business" entails and that is loving God and neighbor.

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Beginning Advent:

What are the key first steps to enter into Advent?

We can all slow down. We can all breathe more deeply. We can all begin to trust that this will be a blessed time. Then, when we let ourselves be who we are, and hear the Scriptures, we can begin to quietly pray, "Come, Lord, Jesus." We might expand that prayer, in quiet moments of our days ahead, "Come into my life. I trust you don't mind if it is still messy. I believe you love me, because I need your love. I don't fear you can't find the way to my heart. Come and fill me with peace and the love only you can give." Some of us will want to open our hands on our laps or hold up our arms in the privacy of our rooms and say out loud, "Come, Lord, Jesus, come into this house, into my family, into our struggles. Come and heal us, and give us joy again. Come and unite us and let us experience, each in our own way, a bit of the joy you are offering me now." And, before a single decoration goes up, we have prepared for Christmas' message with the foundation of faith, with the mystery of Advent's gift. God wants to be with us. Advent is letting God's will be done in our hearts and in our everyday lives.

Getting in Touch with Myself

One of the best ways to prepare for the very special season of Advent is to "get in touch with ourselves." It may sound odd, but one symptom of our contemporary lives is that we can often be quite "out of touch" with what is going on in our very own hearts. We are about to begin our Advent, right at the time our Western culture begins Christmas preparations. It is a busy time, and our heads are filled with details to remember. And, it is a time of emotional complexity that is part of this holiday season - with all of the expectations and challenges of family and relationships: who we want to be with and who we struggle to be with. So, our hearts are a bit tender, if not completely defended from experiencing anything deeply. We are about to hear some very powerful and stirring readings from Isaiah, the Prophet. We will re-enter the ancient tradition of a people longing for the coming of a Savior. We may remember the days of our childhood when we longed for Christmas to come, because it was a magical time of receiving gifts. As adults, we have to ask ourselves: "What is it I long for now?" The answer won't come easily.

The more we walk around with that question, and let it penetrate through the layers of distraction and self-protection, the more powerfully we will experience Advent.

"Taken from *Praying Advent*, on Creighton University's *Online Ministries* web site:
<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html>

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Advent Thoughts: Some of the Church Fathers on the Divinity of Christ

Ignatius of Antioch

"Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the Church at Ephesus in Asia . . . predestined from eternity for a glory that is lasting and unchanging, united and chosen through true suffering by the will of the Father in Jesus Christ our God" (*Letter to the Ephesians* 1 [A.D. 110]).

"For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit" (*ibid.*, 18:2).

Aristides

"[Christians] are they who, above every people of the earth, have found the truth, for they acknowledge God, the Creator and maker of all things, in the only-begotten Son and in the Holy Spirit" (*Apology* 16 [A.D. 140]).

Tatian the Syrian

"We are not playing the fool, you Greeks, nor do we talk nonsense, when we report that God was born in the form of a man" (*Address to the Greeks* 21 [A.D. 170]).

Clement of Alexandria "The Word, then, the Christ, is the cause both of our ancient beginning—for he was in God—and of our well-being. And now this same Word has appeared as man. He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things" (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 1:7:1 [A.D. 190]).

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ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES

Dec 4 St. Thomas Aquinas, West Lafayette 7:00pm

St. Mary, Frankfort 7:00pm

Dec 5 Blessed Sacrament, West Lafayette 6:00pm

Dec 11 St. Francis Xavier, Attica 7:00pm

St. Lawrence, Lafayette 7:00pm

Dec 13 St. Boniface, Lafayette 7:00pm

Dec 14 St. Joseph, Covington 7:00pm

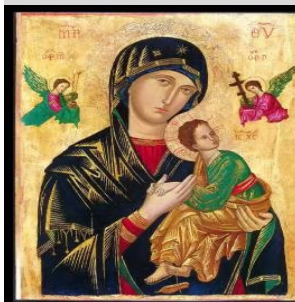
Dec 20 St. Mary Cathedral, Lafayette 7:00pm

Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been Words known even before my First Communion rush back in this quiet fearful sanctuary and stop dead in my throat. How do I even begin to explain the twenty-five years since my last confession coupled with my sins of absence from Mass? The attempts to rationalize become feeble. My souls eyes search them, stripping my banal and petty excuses. I am left with the cloak I hide in, fraying all its threads. And in that darkness, I am confronted by my fears that, if I speak, will my penance be my eviction? I could easily bolt to the foolish refuge of the outside world. Yet, the very act of confession means facing what is in our secret hearts as well as admitting the cringing embarrassment of exposing and voicing aloud our sins. I suppose that is the real difficulty; our attempts to be humble when our whole being screams self-sufficient independence and our pride shouts dependency on no one. Ah, but humility requests from our pride and his willing accomplice, the ego, a high price our stilled and penitent heart. In my search to find that silent peace, I am left in the darkness with my parish priest and God to speak to on the folly of my sins. Yet how could He forgive my teetering trust and struggle to find my faith? Mary is a bit easier to approach on my prayers of intercession.

The compression of too many years lengthens the list of sins. I have harbored anger, envy, impure thoughts; the venial at their worst, but have I really fallen into the mortal? Marrying out of the faith and divorced, yet I left a marriage that had become abusive; where does that lie? Requesting forgiveness for what I have done is always accompanied by the caveat, what I have failed to do. The easy anonymity of sliding into the confessional does not absolve the razor sharp pangs of judgment in stealing oneself from God. The whys of my leaving endeavor to explain away the best of my excuses, but carry little weight toward the necessity of my returning.

It had become a very real ache of loneliness and missing the very orderliness and regularity of her liturgical year. There is the gift of knowing that each foothold and handhold is the reason for the strength to stay on. Would He, God, the recipient of so much supplication, welcome back the prodigal? Not necessarily caring about the fatted calf, would there at least be the solace for a wandering souls need to be allowed to come home again? In faith neglected, I grab ancient prayers, still remembered, to plead for forgiveness, much like the old story of the charwoman kneeling in the back of the Church because she felt unworthy to go and pray at the altar rail. Her countenance was quite unlike the fellow she saw and heard, who loudly proclaimed all his good works to God by self announcement, knowing he could laud his own virtues by standing before God. I am with the charwoman, worn and weary and like her, I pray in exhaustion, asking for help, unable to carry the burden alone. She has the greater grace than I in her silent requests for absolution. Yet my pride is still winning the skirmish and sabotaging my deeds, dismissing them as only silly guilt; the shame hardly worth the necessity for confession.

Ah, but as the priest and God wait in patient hope, I turn my heart to Mary, beseeching some part of her courage that accepted in silence the agonizing death of her only child. There, in unworthiness, begins my souls deep acknowledgment of my rupture and my need of reparation to be received back into the Church. Confession is not a slick magic trick conjured by a few quick Hail Mary's and Acts of Contrition- we cannot meet halfway to the middle we need to go the distance, meet faith, and trust to the end. No need of my added noise only my whispers they will speak within my trepidation, gentle in their clarity. Yet, perhaps God, aware of the immensity of His name; chose this as one of his reasons for sending His son to us someone who would never be ashamed to been seen in our company. It was not written on a gilt-edged invitation sent by a footman waiting for a reply; only His quiet request in person to the worst of us to be guests at His table.
By Ann Casey Catholic Online (www.catholic.org)



AVE MARIA

*Ave Maria, grátia plena, Dóminus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus
véntris tui, Iésus.
Sáncta María, Máter Dei, ora pro nobis
peccatóribus, nunc et in hóra mórtis nóstrae.
Amen.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

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THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

1422 "Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion."⁴

I. WHAT IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED?

1423 It is called the *sacrament of conversion* because it makes sacramentally present Jesus' call to conversion, the first step in returning to the Father⁵ from whom one has strayed by sin.

It is called the *sacrament of Penance*, since it consecrates the Christian sinner's personal and ecclesial steps of conversion, penance, and satisfaction.

1424 It is called the *sacrament of confession*, since the disclosure or confession of sins to a priest is an essential element of this sacrament. In a profound sense it is also a "confession" - acknowledgment and praise - of the holiness of God and of his mercy toward sinful man.

It is called the *sacrament of forgiveness*, since by the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent "pardon and peace."⁶

It is called the *sacrament of Reconciliation*, because it imparts to the sinner the love of God who reconciles: "Be reconciled to God."⁷ He who lives by God's merciful love is ready to respond to the Lord's call: "Go; first be reconciled to your brother."⁸

II. WHY A SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AFTER BAPTISM?

1425 "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."⁹ One must appreciate the magnitude of the gift God has given us in the sacraments of Christian initiation in order to grasp the degree to which sin is excluded for him who has "put on Christ."¹⁰ But the apostle John also says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."¹¹ And the Lord himself taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses,"¹² linking our forgiveness of one another's offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.

1426 *Conversion* to Christ, the new birth of Baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Body and Blood of Christ received as food have made us "holy and without blemish," just as the Church herself, the Bride of Christ, is "holy and without blemish."¹³ Nevertheless the new life received in Christian initiation has not abolished the frailty and weakness of human nature, nor the inclination to sin that tradition calls *concupiscence*, which remains in the baptized such that with the help of the grace of Christ they may prove themselves in the struggle of Christian life.¹⁴ Th

is the struggle of *conversion* directed toward holiness and eternal life to which the Lord never ceases to call us.¹⁵

III. THE CONVERSION OF THE BAPTIZED

1427 Jesus calls to conversion. This call is an essential part of the proclamation of the kingdom: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."¹⁶ In the Church's preaching this call is addressed first to those who do not yet know Christ and his Gospel. Also, Baptism is the principal place for the first and fundamental conversion. It is by faith in the Gospel and by Baptism¹⁷ that one renounces evil and gains salvation, that is, the forgiveness of all sins and the gift of new life.

1428 Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians. This *second conversion* is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church who, "clasping sinners to her bosom, [is] at once holy and always in need of purification, [and] follows constantly the path of penance and renewal."¹⁸ This endeavor of conversion is not just a human work. It is the movement of a "contrite heart," drawn and moved by grace to respond to the merciful love of God who loved us first.¹⁹

1429 St. Peter's conversion after he had denied his master three times bears witness to this. Jesus' look of infinite mercy drew tears of repentance from Peter and, after the Lord's resurrection, a threefold affirmation of love for him.²⁰ The second conversion also has a *communitarian* dimension, as is clear in the Lord's call to a whole Church: "Repent!"²¹

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Joy to the World: How Christ's Coming Changed Everything (and Still Does)

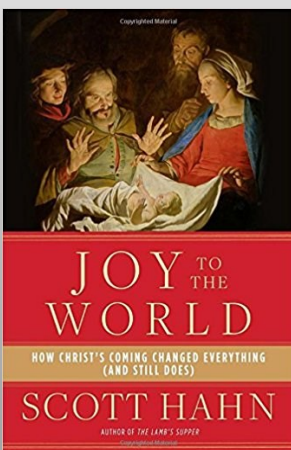
by Scott Hahn, Mike Aquilina

"In this wonderful book, Scott Hahn beautifully explains that the Christmas story is foremost a family story."

-Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York

In this book, best-selling author Dr. Scott Hahn brings the first Noel to new light through his thought-provoking combination of exciting story-telling and penetrating biblical insight. He shows Christmas to be a family story. Christmas, as it appears in the New Testament, is the story of a father, a mother, and a child...their relationships, their interactions, their principles, their individual lives, and their life in common. What could be more familiar than the Christmas story -- and yet what could be more extraordinary? The cast of characters is strange and exotic: shepherds and magicians, an emperor and a despot, angels, and a baby who is Almighty God. The strangeness calls for an explanation, and this book provides it by examining the characters and the story in light of the biblical and historical context. Bestselling author Scott Hahn who has written extensively on Scripture and the early Church, brings evidence to light, dispelling some of the mystery of the story. Yet Christmas is made familiar all over again by showing it to be a family story. Christmas, as it appears in the New Testament, is the story of a father, a mother, and a child -- their relationships, their interactions, their principles, their individual lives, and their common life. To see the life of this "earthly trinity" is to gaze into heaven

An Advent/Christmas gift for you. Copies will be placed in the pew. You may take one home to read and reflect on throughout this holy season or leave it in the pew to use before and after Mass as you welcome the Savior into your heart.



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Announcements and Upcoming Events



Schoenstatt of Indiana welcomes Sr. Ann Astell, Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University to share the depth of Schoenstatt's Founder Fr. Joseph Kentenich's childhood prayer, "Hail Mary for the sake of your purity..." on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 7, 2017 at 6PM at MCL Cafeteria. Meal is on your own followed by Sister's talk at 6:30pm.

The Saint Dunstan Schola presents

A GEORGE MALCOLM CENTENNIAL

Join us for a musical celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Malcolm, Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral and critically acclaimed harpsichordist. The two-part concert will feature music from both aspects of his musical personality – the first half, in honor of the Advent season, will feature the Saint Dunstan schola singing Malcolm's *Christus Natus Est* – a setting of the liturgical office of Matins for Christmas, interspersed with readings from the Bible and the Church Fathers. The second half will feature special guest performer Dr. Rebecca Burkhart, professor of harpsichord at Ball State University, performing some of Malcolm's signature pieces – along with a few musical surprises along the way. Saturday, December 16th...a light supper will be offered in Memorial Hall after Mass with the concert to follow in the church.

Free will offering to benefit the St. Matthew 25 Care-and-Share Soup Kitchen.

It has been sent on to Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services as follows:

For Hurricane Harvey	\$121,209.20
For Hurricane Irma	\$104,919.21
For Hurricane Maria	\$106,527.55
For the Mexican Earthquake victims	<u>\$ 2,344.38</u>
Total	\$335,000.34

A wonderful response from the faithful in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana

STEWARDSHIP BY THE BOOK: This First Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year. All the readings during this period of waiting and anticipation concentrate on making us aware that it is time for us to awaken our lives as Christians. Jesus opens our Gospel Reading from St. Mark by saying "Be watchful! Be alert!" and closes it with an intense "Watch!"

For many Advent and Christmas are times of light, whether it is the light of the candles on Advent wreaths or the lights on a tree or the festive lights which decorate many houses and businesses. Jesus brings light into our worlds, but we must allow this light to permeate our own lives, to enter into the dark and sinful parts of our lives to illuminate and cleanse them.

This should be a time of renewed prayer and penance which truly prepares us to "watch" for the Lord, not just at Christmas but throughout our lives. There is a natural wonder among children at this time of year, but sometimes as we age, we lose that sense as if we are sleeping. It is time to awaken. Our minds may say "Let go" but our spirituality tells us to "Awaken." We are filled with spiritual depths. It is time to seek them, find them, and awaken them. It is Advent, time for us to awaken and become aware of the gifts of love we have received from God and others. Or as Jesus reminds us: "Watch."

SUNDAY OFFERING:

\$6738

"FIND OUT HOW MUCH GOD HAS GIVEN YOU, AND FROM IT TAKE WHAT YOU NEED; THE REMAINDER IS NEEDED BY OTHERS"

ST. AUGUSTINE