

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 24, 2017

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: SEE MISSAL

TUESDAY: ACTS 6:8-10, 7:54-59, PS 31, MT
10:17-22

WEDNESDAY: 1JN1:1-4, PS 97, JN 20:1A, 2:8

THURSDAY: 1JN 1:5, 2:2, PS 124, MT 2;13-18

FRIDAY: 1JN2:3-11, PS 96, LK 2:22-35

SATURDAY: 1JN2:12-27, PS 96, LK 2:36-40

**NEXT SUNDAY: HOLY FAMILY-RDGS:
SIR 3:2-6,12-14, or GN 15:1-6;21:1-3, PS 128
or 105, COL 3:12-21, or HEB 11:8,11-12,17-19,
LK 2;22-40**

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: DAWN(7:30):DEC. PRIESTS OF
THE DIOCESE

DAY(9:30): FOR THE PARISH

TUESDAY: DEC. OF ANDERSON/FARRELL
FAMILIES

WEDNESDAY:MIKE & CHERYL GEIGER

THURSDAY:HONOR OF THE BVM

FRIDAY:POOR SOULS

VIGIL:PAT & MARGARET KEIFER

7:30:RITA MILLER

10:00:PAUL MILLER

NOON:FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

All members of St. Ann's parish, families-living
& deceased: Farrell & LaGuire families. Jody
Geller. Marian Schwartz. (Norb, Mark & Vin-
cent FitzSimons, Larry White). Ann Hubertz.
Jason Cole. Maria T. Parkinson. Marvin An-
throp. (Clem, Wilbur, Fran, Paul, Phyliss &
James Boehle). David & Kenny Synesael. Cecil
Albregts.

GOSPEL REFLECTION:

*And the angel said to her in reply,
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*

Long before the day of Pentecost we have here ample evidence of the way in which Our Lady serves to remind us of the work of Christ and the gracious way he has in treating us as his brothers and sisters. The gift of the Spirit which brought about the incarnation in the womb of Mary is now that same Spirit which enlivens in our hearts the presence of Christ so that we can echo the words of the Apostle, "I now no longer live, Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). We are all overshadowed by a power from on high, a power infinitely greater than ourselves and a power which, in the words of Augustine knows us better than we know ourselves. That is why we continue to imitate Mary and "ponder all these things in our hearts", (Luke 2:19). This "pondering" takes the form of prayer, fasting and works of mercy. In prayer we take our cue from another Mary and choose the better part (Lk. 10:42) and it shall not be taken from us, as we remain with the Lord and receive from him our very source of strength (John 15:4). This in turn leads us to consider how fasting keeps us free from distractions in order to listen and obey to the word in which we find our sustenance (Deut. 8:3). Seeking this imperishable "bread" we forsake all others as mere shadows, pretenders and as naught when it comes to receiving that for which we were created. Finally, in works of mercy we truly imitate Our Lord. Just as Mary was granted the privilege of bring the Christ into the world through the mystery of the Incarnation, we, each day, bring forth Christ when we put others before ourselves and seek first the Kingdom of God by responding to the least of the brothers and sisters (Mt. 25).



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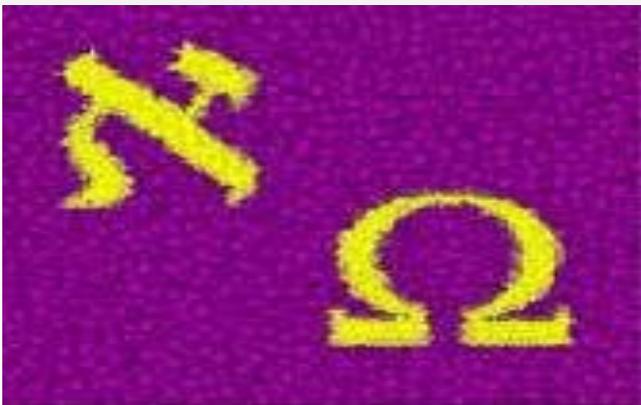
The Two Parts of Advent:

Part 1: up until December 16

While most liturgical seasons have the gospel as their main focus, during the first weeks of Advent, the Church gives us daily readings from the prophet Isaiah. With the eyes of faith, these foretell the coming of the Messiah. Rather than a continuous gospel narrative familiar to us for most of the year, this part of Advent offers a wide variety of gospel readings that support the first reading of the day. After almost two weeks of Isaiah readings, we hear the foretelling of a Messiah from other prophets from the Hebrew scriptures - in Sirach, Numbers, Zephaniah and returning to Isaiah. With each passing week, the prophets speak more clearly of the coming of a Savior. So, in reading the first reading, for the first part of Advent, we listen to the anticipation, expectation, hope and promise. In listening to the second reading, we listen for the fulfillment or connection with the gospel.

Part 2: December 17 - 24

In these last eight days before Christmas, the relationship between the readings changes. Now the gospel brings us to our celebration of Christmas. The gospels are taken from the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. Each of these days, the first reading is taken from the Hebrew scriptures, and chosen to match the gospel. In many cases we can imagine Matthew or Luke having the first reading open on their desks while they wrote the gospel. So, we can read the gospel first and then read the first reading. The sense of anticipation and fulfillment builds as we read the story of the preparation for Jesus' first coming into this world for us.



Praising the Names of

Jesus:

The Antiphons of Advent

by Jeanne Kun

It is especially in the final week of Advent that our attention is fixed on the messianic promises proclaimed by the ancient prophets of Israel. A distinctive feature of the Liturgy of the Hours in this week preceding the Christmas vigil is the antiphon sung at Vespers (evening prayer) before and after the recitation of the Magnificat. Originally incorporated into the monastic office in the Middle Ages, these antiphons, often called the "Greater Antiphons" or the "O Antiphons", are also echoed in the daily lectionary as the verse for the gospel acclamation during this week. They add a mood of eager expectation to the liturgy that builds throughout these seven days and climaxes at Christmas.

The O Antiphons have been described as "a unique work of art and a special ornament of the pre-Christmas liturgy, filled with the Spirit of the Word of God". They "create a poetry that fills the liturgy with its splendor", and their composer shows "a magnificent command of the Bible's wealth of motifs". The antiphons are, in fact, a collage of Old Testament types of Christ. Their predominant theme is messianic, stressing the hope of the Savior's coming. Jesus is invoked by various titles, mainly taken from the prophet Isaiah. The sequence progresses historically, from the beginning, before creation, to the very gates of Bethlehem.

In their structure, each of the seven antiphons follows the same pattern, resembling a traditional liturgical prayer. Each O Antiphon begins with an invocation of the expected Messiah, followed by praise of him under one of his particular titles.

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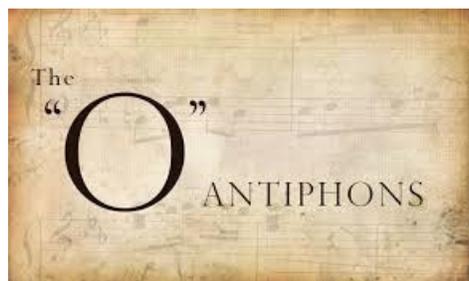
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Each ends with a petition for God's people, relevant to the title by which he is addressed, and the cry for him to "Come".

The seven titles attributed to Jesus in the antiphons are Wisdom (*Sapientia* in Latin), Ruler of the House of Israel (*Adonai*), Root of Jesse (*Radix*), Key of David (*Clavis*), Rising Dawn (*Oriens*), King of the Gentiles (*Rex*), and Emmanuel. In Latin the initials of the titles make an acrostic which, when read backwards, means: "Tomorrow I will be there" ("Ero cras"). To the medieval mind this was clearly a reference to the approaching Christmas vigil.

Today the O Antiphons are most familiar to us in the hymn "O come, O come Emmanuel". Each verse of the hymn parallels one of the antiphons. In addition to their use in the Liturgy of the Hours and the gospel acclamation, they have been popularly incorporated into church devotions and family prayer. An Advent prayer service for use at home, in school, or in the events of parish life can be built around the singing or recitation of the antiphons, accompanied by the related Scripture readings and prayers. They can be prayed at family dinner times or with the lighting of the Advent wreath, with a short explanation of their biblical background. The titles can also be depicted by simple symbols - for example, on banners and posters or in bulletin illustrations - to help us to reflect on these Advent themes.

(c) 2000 Jeanne Kun



THE THREE MASSES OF CHRISTMAS

The custom of celebrating three Masses on Christmas Day goes back to ancient times. The Christians of Jerusalem attended Mass at midnight at the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem; then they returned to Jerusalem and at day-break (the hour of the Resurrection) attended a second Mass at the Basilica of the Resurrection; later on, they attended the regular services of the day. In Rome, a similar custom prevailed. The midnight Mass was celebrated at the Crib at St. Mary Major; the second, at the imperial church of St. Anastasia; the third, at St. Peter's Basilica. All three Masses are permeated with the thought of the threefold birth of Christ.



First (Midnight) Mass

The eternal generation of the Son by the Father: in the eternal now the Father is begetting the Son: "The Lord hath said to me: 'Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee' "

- *The temporal birth of the Son of God:* "This day is born to you a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David" (Gosp.). The gracious Babe of Bethlehem is the innocent Victim Who one day will be offered on the Cross for "the sins of the world".

Birth of Christ in the Soul: Today's Liturgy abounds in references to

"light." Christ is the Light of the world, "Light of Light".  **The Second Mass at Christmas (at dawn)**

The Christmas Liturgy shows forth the Eucharistic Host in the setting of Bethlehem. The tabernacle is truly Bethlehem, the "House of Bread." The Altar is the manger where lies the Infant God, our Emmanuel. Come, let us adore Him.

- *Christ is true God:* He is the "Wonderful, God, the Prince of Peace, the Father of the world to come, of whose reign there shall be no end".

Christ is true Man: He is the God-Man. "In that sacred night the undefiled Virginity of blessed Mary brought forth the Savior into this world".

Christ is born in our hearts: He has come to save us. He is the Savior of the world. He gives us His grace and thus prepares us for life everlasting. He overcomes the old man in us, makes us partakers of divine life, and helps us to show forth in our actions that which by faith shines in our mind.

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The Third Mass of Christmas (during the day)

Christ became what we are in order to make us become what He is. The Son of God became Son of Man that the sons of men might become the sons of God. He Who was rich in heavenly glory became poor for our sakes that through His poverty we might become rich. He Who was eternally happy in heaven became the Man of Sorrows that through His tears we might enter into the joy of the Lord.

- *Christ is God:* He is the brightness of God's glory and the figure of His substance. He upholds all things by the word of His power. All the angels adore Him. His throne is forever and ever. He is unchanging and His years shall not fail.

Christ became Man: "A child is born to us, and a Son is given to us". The only begotten Son of God is born in the flesh.

Christ came to save us: The Church sings that on "this day a great light hath descended upon the earth". This light shone in the darkness but the darkness did not comprehend it. "As many as received Him to them He gave power to become the sons of God". — Excerpted from *Cathedral Daily Missal* by Right Rev. Msgr. Rudolph G. Bandas PH.D., AGG., S.T.D., et M.

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the Virgin Mary

Mary, sweet peace and dearest consolation
of suffering mortal: you are the fount whence springs
the current of solicitude that brings
unto our soil unceasing fecundation.

From your abode, enthroned on heaven's height,
in mercy deign to hear my cry of woe
and to the radiance of your mantle draw
my voice that rises with so swift a flight.

You are my mother, Mary, and shall be
my life, my stronghold, my defense most thorough;
and you shall be my guide on this wild sea.

If vice pursues me madly on the morrow,
if death harasses me with agony:
come to my aid and dissipate my sorrow!

Jose Rizal



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CHRISTMASTIME

For most, Christmas is over by December 26 and life has resumed its normal activities. The Church, on the other hand, observes an Octave of Christmas until January 1 (after the Jewish practice of an 8 day celebration) and an extended Christmastime until January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. (It is now celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and January 8.) The popular Christmas song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," is rooted in the festive celebration of Christmastime and a celebration of the Catholic faith, from a time in England and Ireland when Catholics had to disguise their Catholic beliefs.

During Christmastime, there are feasts of three martyrs: St. Stephen on December 26, who represents those who went to their death willingly; St. John the Evangelist on December 27 who represents those who were willing to die but were not put to death, and the Holy Innocents on December 28, representing those who were put to death without their choice, recalling the events surrounding the Birth of Christ.

On the Sunday between Christmas and January 1, the Church celebrates the Holy Family. This feast is especially important today as many families today face struggles and challenges in living their Faith.

Epiphany

Epiphany is normally celebrated on January 6, although it can be celebrated on the Sunday between January 2 and 8, as is done in the United States and many other countries. It may also combine the celebration of all three epiphanies ("showing forths") of Christ – His epiphany to the Magi at His birth, His epiphany to St. John at His baptism in the Jordan and His epiphany to the disciples and the opening of His public ministry by the miracle of Cana.

However, its primary significance is the closing of the Christmas season with the celebration of the visit of the Magi to the manger (Matthew 2:1-12). The Messiah is thus shown to have come to all people, not just the Jews.

The three kings represent the three major races:

Melchior, an old white man with a long white beard, bearing the gift of gold for Christ's royalty;

Caspar, young and of darker hue, carrying incenses for Christ's divinity; and

Balthasar, a black man, offering myrrh for Christ's suffering and death.

The names of the wise men are not given in the Bible, but were supplied by later story tellers to enrich the meaning and celebration of the Epiphany.

Blessing of Homes

A tradition associated with Epiphany is the blessing of homes with holy water and incense. Using blessed chalk, a parent can mark the inside of the main door of the house with the initials of the Magi and a code of the current year connected with crosses: 20+C+M+B+02. Another explanation of the initials (C-M-B) are the first letters of the blessing: *Christus mansionem benedicat* (Latin, "May Christ bless the house").

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Announcements and Upcoming Events

What do we really mean by "God"?

Atheism is on the rise. Skeptical thinkers like Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Sam Harris vigorously attack belief in God as irrational or, even worse, dangerous. The so-called New Atheism has attracted millions of young people thanks to bestselling books such as *The God Delusion* and *God Is Not Great*.

How should Christians respond? How can we turn the tide of secularism and draw people back to God?

In this new six-part film series and study program, Bishop Robert Barron reaches into our rich intellectual tradition to teach us how. Using the insights of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Benedict XVI, he uncovers a clear yet sophisticated understanding of what we mean by "God".

Who is God? And why does he matter? Watch this series and you'll not only learn the answers yourself, but you'll discover how to share them with others - especially those who no longer believe.

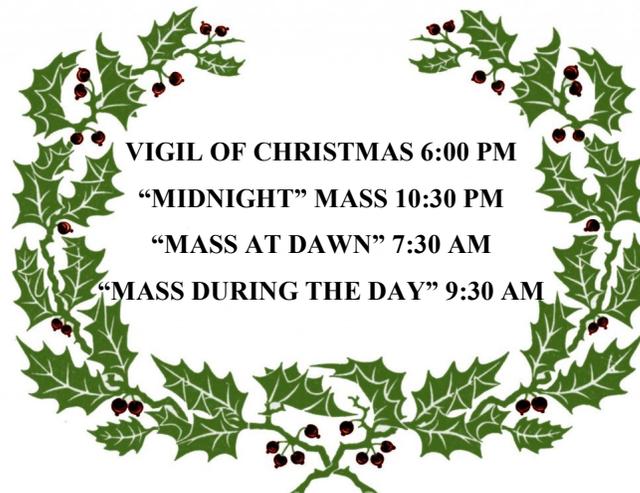
COMING:

MYSTERY OF GOD

JANUARY 7TH TO MARCH 4TH

(watch the bulletin for details)

January 1st if the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God, it is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year since it falls on a Monday however, there will be a mass at 7am and one at noon said by Bishop Doherty. For many this is a wonderful way to begin the New Year. Please welcome the Bishop to St. Ann by attending this Mass.



VIGIL OF CHRISTMAS 6:00 PM

"MIDNIGHT" MASS 10:30 PM

"MASS AT DAWN" 7:30 AM

"MASS DURING THE DAY" 9:30 AM

STEWARDSHIP BY THE BOOK: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." With those words our Blessed Mother Mary places her total trust in God. We are called to do the same, and this final Sunday of Advent is the time for us to do that, if we have not previously. Mary's response to God is the same response we need to offer the Lord. It is most appropriate that we hear this message at this time and on this day.

This took much more trust in the Lord than we might imagine. Mary agreed to receive a pregnancy that would be seen as suspect in a culture which had a potential death penalty for adultery. Spiritually speaking, there are similarities between the Lord's work in Mary and His work in all of us. Jesus lives within each of us spiritually. He lived in Mary not only spiritually but also physically.

Jesus was made visible to the world through Mary physically, but He should be made visible to the world through us as well. Who we are and how we relate to and treat others is a sign to the world of Who Jesus is and what a Christian is and should be. Are we showing the world what it means to be His disciple? Is there a better time than this to do so?

The entertainer and comedian Bob Hope once said, "My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?"

SUNDAY OFFERING

\$9500

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

ST. AUGUSTINE