

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 9, 2018

MASS READINGS

MONDAY: IS 35:1-10, LK 5:17-26

TUESDAY: IS 40:1-11; MT 18:12-14

WEDNESDAY: ZEC 2:14-17 OR RV 11:19A; 12:1-6A,
10AB; LK 1:26-38 OR LK 1:39-47

THURSDAY: PS 41:13-20, MT 11:11-15

FRIDAY: IS 48:17-19; MT 11:16-19

SATURDAY: SIR 48:1-4,9-11; MT 17:8A,10-13

**NEXT SUNDAY: THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT –
ZEP 3:14-18A; PHIL 4:4-7; LK 3:10-18**



**PREPARE
A WAY FOR THE LORD**
LUKE 3:4

Somewhere back in October a certain segment of our society began preparations for this season. Although their preparations were motivated by something rather foreign to this season one has to admire their intensity. It is getting to the point where we might be disappointed in NOT seeing reminders of Christmas sharing the same aisle space with Halloween items drastically reduced. After a while this simply serves as evidence of how we find it so difficult to focus on the moment for even say, a moment. Once something has been reported it is no longer news, no longer relevant and we go searching for the next story on which to hang our interest. The conclusion of one election having just arrived, a politician, with one speech, automatically bids us to focus on the next one no matter how far away it is. The first sporting event of the season quickly demands that we direct our attention to the playoffs. My grandfather used to refer to this as “wishing your life away”. I would express to him my anticipation for something and he would just look at me and shake his head and say “don’t wish your life away”. Needless to say I hadn’t a clue as to what he meant until I am reminded that he is no longer here and my life has indeed been “wished away” through a variety of anticipations over the years. Thinking about those many things for which I longed it invariably seems that the longing was more palpable than the actual event buried somewhere in the past. A song comes to mind, “slow down you move to fast, got to make the morning last...” Can we truly slow down? Are we not at the mercy of the forces of our culture which usher us through our lives like a tsunami until we come to a point where we find ourselves stopping to wonder where it all went? Advent is just such an opportunity, not only to slow down and enjoy but to prepare for something which is beyond our expectation and fulfills every one of our longings. As predictable as Christmas merchandise in October, are sermons on keeping the spirit of Advent. Those sermons however, are not trying to put the kibosh on people’s fun and celebration, only to remind them to begin preparation for something for more thrilling and enriching, and not just in preparation for the coming feast of the Nativity but of the kind of life we have been looking for all along, something we can’t “wish away”, eternal life! All that anticipation we have expressed over the years is simply evidence that we long for something and what that is only God can satisfy, for that however, we need to slow down and prepare.

MASS INTENTIONS

MONDAY: MARJORIE YOUNG

TUESDAY: PAULA SMITH

WEDNESDAY: JOHN LIBBERS

THURSDAY: BONNIE SNOUWAERT

FRIDAY: POOR SOULS

VIGIL: PAUL VELTEN

7:30: CHARLES & CATHERINE SPITZNAGLE

10:00: PAULA SMITH

NOON: FOR THE PARISH

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

For the deceased religious & for the Poor Souls: (Clarice & John Collins, Edith & Iredell Wright, Mary Jane Dill).

(Claude & Anna King, Robert & Mary Bloyd). (Ed &

Jenny Pitstick, Judy & Kenny Shoults, John & Ida

Reeves, John & Helen Sondgerath, Pat Matson). Butz &

Alting families. Shirley Wagner. Joshua Robinette.

(Jody Geller & Johnna Parker). Charles Connor. Mil-

dred Hayes. Luke Spitznagle. Michael W. Corbin.

Mary Jo Danaher. Dorothy Nelson.

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*O, the clanging bells of time,
Night and day they never cease;
We are wearied with their chime,
For they do not bring us peace;
And we hush our breath to hear,
And we strain our eyes to see
If thy shores are drawing near,
Eternity! Eternity!*

*O, the clanging bells of time,
Soon their notes will all be dumb,
And in joy and peace sublime,
We shall feel the silence come;
And our souls their thirst will slake,
And our eyes the King will see,
When thy glorious morn shall break,
Eternity! Eternity!*

What does John the Baptist teach us about the meaning of Advent?

Jesus said that John the Baptist is the greatest of all prophets: “there is none greater than John” (Mt 11:11a). Why? Because the other prophets prepared the people for a Messiah who would come in the long-distant future, but John the Baptist prepared the people for the Messiah who was about to arrive, and when Jesus finally did appear, he was given the exclusive privilege of being the only prophet to announce that the Messiah had, in fact, come. As Jesus approached John pointed to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” (Jn 1:29,36).

The Baptist had a miraculous birth, and in Scripture when a person is the product of a miracle birth, the person always has an extra-special vocation. John’s mother Elizabeth was elderly, had no children, and was beyond her child-bearing years, yet the archangel Gabriel appeared to her husband Zechariah, a priest in the Temple in Jerusalem, and announced that she would conceive, and so she did. John was filled with the Holy Spirit even while he was in his mother’s womb (Lk 1:15), and he was chosen by God to be “the forerunner,” to continue the ministry of Elijah, the Old Testament prophet who was to reappear to announce the Messiah (Mal 3:23).

It is no surprise, then, that John appeared wearing a coat of camel’s hair. Elijah is the only Old Testament prophet to dress in this way (2 Kgs 1:8). Jesus would later explain how Elijah had come before him in the person of John the Baptist (Mt 17:10-13; Mk 9:11-13).

There had been no prophet in Israel for hundreds of years, so people were thrilled at the prospect that a prophet had appeared during their lifetimes. If the Baptist truly was what was claimed, a prophet and the return of Elijah, the people could hardly let the opportunity pass. Crowds went in great numbers out into the desert, a traditional place of encounter with God, to hear what this exceptional man of God had to say.

John cried out, “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Mk 1:3). This message, ever-old, initially for the crowds two thousand years ago, is ever-new for us today. During this Advent season we should prepare the way of the Lord, clear away any obstacle that would prevent Jesus from coming to us, so that when he does appear on Christmas, he will have unimpeded access to our hearts.

John also preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mk 1:4). John wanted his listeners to renounce sin, be washed of their past impurities, and be in the state of grace when Jesus appeared.

Likewise, as we anticipate the memorial of the coming of Christ, if we wish to be well prepared for the solemn feast of Christmas, we would be wise to renounce our own sin, be washed of our past impurities, and be in the state of grace on Christmas when Jesus comes to us once again. The Baptist kept Jesus first above all things (Jn 3:30), and so should we!

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This traditional prayer in honor of St. John the Baptist has three parts, corresponding to the three stages of his life: his decision to go into the wilderness to practice a life of penance and mortification; his preaching to those who followed him into the wilderness, preparing their hearts for the coming of Christ; and his martyrdom at the order of King Herod.

Note the attributes of John the Baptist that are included in the prayer: He is, as Christ Himself said, the "greatest prophet born of woman".

In Honor of St. John the Baptist

I. O glorious Saint John the Baptist, greatest prophet among those born of woman, although thou wast sanctified in thy mother's womb and didst lead a most innocent life, nevertheless it was thy will to retire into the wilderness, there to devote thyself to the practice of austerity and penance; obtain for us of thy Lord the grace to be wholly detached, at least in our hearts, from earthly goods, and to practice Christian mortification with interior recollection and with the spirit of holy prayer.

V. Pray for us, Saint John the Baptist

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast made this day to be honorable in our eyes by the commemoration of blessed John the Baptist, grant unto Thy people the grace of spiritual joy, and direct the minds of all Thy faithful into the way of everlasting salvation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

There is an important principal that we can learn from the story of John the Baptist. Even though our Bible seems to have little to say about John, he conveys to us a simple but important message that still applies today about the repentance of sins.

How did John 'prepare the way'?

We are clearly told that John was sent to 'prepare the way' for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:2-3), but what exactly did he do in preparing the way? In Luke 3:3-4, we are told, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Also in Matthew 3:1-3, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

So how did the people cooperate with John in preparing the way for Jesus? They confessed their sins and were baptized as a sign that they have turned from their sins, as Matthew 3:6 tells us, "And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

What does it mean to 'prepare the way'? It means to create a favorable environment or to make it easy for one to come to you and operate in your life. Let's take a look at Luke 3:4-5, "As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth." Apparently, John the baptist was creating a favorable environment and making it easy for Jesus to enter into and operate in the lives of the people.

The same is true on the other side of the coin. Notice how John the baptist prepared the way for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ through preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. He created a favorable environment for Jesus to enter and operate in. The same principal is true on the other side of the coin, where people get involved in deep sins in order to gain spirit guides, etc. When people get involved in heavy Satanism, they can commit gross sins such as bestiality (sex with animals) in order to gain spirit guides or other demonic powers. Such sins defiles a person and creates a 'favorable environment' for the spirits to dwell and operate. Sin 'prepares the way' for the devil and his demons, while repentance and remission of sins prepares the way for the Lord!

How does this apply to us today?

I believe the Lord gave me a beautiful revelation about how we can 'prepare the way' for the Lord in our own lives. John the baptist was said to be sent fourth to prepare the way for Jesus, but what exactly did he do? He preached the repentance of sins and baptized people for the remissions of their sins. He was getting people ready for Jesus' arrival by getting them to turn from their sins and repent! For as Hebrews 12:14 tells us, "...holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

I believe a valuable principal we can learn from this story is that if there are unconfessed sins in our lives, they can hinder us from 'seeing the Lord'. We need to repent of our sins and turn from them and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9). By repentance of our sins, we 'prepare the way' for Jesus to operate in our lives!

1 John tells us that if we confess our sins, we not only receive forgiveness for them (1 John 1:9), but they are washed and cleansed from us by the blood of the Lamb (1 John 1:7). They are removed as far from the east to the west (Psalms 103:12)! If we fail to acknowledge our sins, however, Proverbs 28:13 tells us that we will not prosper, "

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

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Simply acknowledging our sins is not enough, as John clearly rebuked the Pharisees for not living up to their confessions in Matthew 3:7-8, "But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized, he denounced them. 'You brood of snakes!' he exclaimed. 'Who warned you to flee God's coming judgment? Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God.'" (NLT) Proverbs 28:13 also makes it clear that we are to turn from our sins, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

The teaching and practicing of water baptism and repentance never seized when Jesus was glorified. After Jesus rose again, He appeared to His disciples and gave them the great commission to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature (race, nation, etc.) and baptize them (Matthew 28:19). Water baptism and repentance was also preached and practiced in the early church as well, as we can see in Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Conclusion

The Bible doesn't necessarily have a lot to say about John, but we do know this, he was sent forth to prepare the way, and he did that by preaching the repentance and remission of the people's sins. I believe that by confessing and turning from our sins, we can prepare the way for the Lord to move and operate in our lives as well.

(taken from GreatBibleStudy.com)

Preparing Our Hearts for Christ

[Jessica Archuleta](#)

Christmas is coming. The day after Thanksgiving, almost everyone is preparing. Shopping for presents, putting up trees, sending cards, making cookies, and hosting parties. In some churches and Christian homes the Advent Wreath will come out, maybe a Jesse Tree, and the Christmas trees and ornaments may be added weekly to slowly emphasize the Light of Christ coming into the world. The Season of Advent is a time of busy preparation and one that even the secular world will not let us forget.

So much of the love for Christmas has to do with family, giving, beauty and the longing for joy and peace in the world. These are all good things and I believe the desire to start celebrating Christmas earlier than we should has to do with people's lives lacking these simple things at other times of the year. People desire the love and goodness that so many enjoy at Christmas time.

The problem with all of this merry making and festivity is that it's happening at the wrong time. Advent is indeed a time of preparation but even more important than getting our shopping list checked off and planning the perfect meal is how we have prepared our souls, how we have prepared our hearts to receive the baby Jesus as our King on Christmas Day.

We must remember that as Christians we do not celebrate Advent or Christmas out of sentiment over the Lord's birth. The reality is this: just as we are truly present in heaven at Divine Liturgy (Mass) we are also truly present at the feasts we celebrate. God of course is outside of time and it is His life that we are sharing in when we participate in the sacraments and the liturgical calendar of the Church. Participation in His life means we are mystically present at the birth of the Messiah. Advent is meant to place us in the time before He was born. The entire Old Testament is a story of preparation. God was preparing His chosen people to give to the world first, Mary—the summit of the Jewish people, and then the fruit of her womb—Jesus Christ.

So how can we prepare our hearts and lives to receive the baby born in the lowly manger on Christmas Day? The best way to do this is the same way Christians have been preparing for major feasts for centuries: through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

"Man has a noble task: That of prayer and love. To pray and love, that is the happiness of man on earth."

– St. Jean Marie Baptiste Vianney

Prayer changes us. Prayer makes way for the Lord to come into our hearts and draw us closer to Him. St. Paul told us to, "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thess 5:16-18) Now is a perfect time to work harder at heeding these words. The beauty of the liturgical calendar is that it allows us to experience salvation history and our Lord's life over and over again. We are invited each year to grow deeper in our relationship with God. Prayer is key to this growth.

Part of increasing our prayer should include celebrating the numerous feast days during Advent: Celebrate St. Nicholas! December 6th is the feast day of St. Nicholas. There are so many wonderful traditions around the word about this awesome saint. We have integrated some Eastern traditions and American traditions into our own family. The first sign of Christmas decorations in our house are put up for St. Nicholas's feast day. I use a little table and place St. Nicholas's icon on it and then surround the icon with all my

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(Mass) for St. Nicholas's feast day. A good breakfast follows church and stories about St. Nicholas are read. We try to pray [this Akathist](#) to St. Nicholas as well. We also hang the kid's stockings in anticipation that they will be filled by St. Nicholas who also brings them a religious gift on Christmas Day (and sometimes something fun too). When the kids are old enough to know that St. Nicholas doesn't actually come, we explain that all of the fun was a way to honor his life and that they are now being called to grow closer to him and deepen their relationship with him.

One way they do this is by helping to prepare the St. Nicholas gifts for their younger siblings. Real love for this saint has grown out of these traditions.

Don't forget your mother! On the Western calendar, Dec. 8th is the feast of the Immaculate Conception. On the Eastern calendar, Dec. 9th is the Conception by St. Anna of the Mother of God. Dec. 12th is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

There are other beloved saints who's feasts fall during Advent (St. Lucy, St. Barbara, St. Spyridon, and St. John of the Cross for example) learn about them and honor them on their feasts! There are many wonderful traditions, which are perfect for Advent, to celebrate the feast of St. Lucy, you can read about them [here](#) and [here](#).

The scriptures that are chosen for this season can be read daily and will deepen our understanding of Advent and Christmas. The U.S. Bishop's website has the daily readings and they have also provided other resources for Advent and Christmas season, you can find more info [here](#).

An Akathist in preparation for Christmas would be a good addition to your prayer routine, you can find it [here](#).

This is also a good time to go to confession to cleanse our souls with repentance and forgiveness before receiving the Lord on Christmas Day.

"Through fasting and praying, we allow Him to come and satisfy the deepest hunger that we experience in the depths of our being: the hunger and thirst for God." – Pope Benedict XVI

There is a hunger inside all of us that food alone could never satisfy. We try very hard during the holidays to meet that satisfaction in some way. As we all know, it never lasts. Fasting from certain foods can help us to understand that God alone fills our deepest desires. Eastern Catholics keep a traditional fast of the Church that goes a long way in helping us realize this truth. The Nativity Fast is a vegan fast with fish and shellfish allowed for half of Advent on certain days. This fast is kept in varying degrees by the faithful in the Eastern churches. I have written about how my family keeps this fast [here](#). This may give you some ideas to work from.

"To do alms is a work greater than miracles. . . . To feed the hungry in the name of Christ is a work greater than raising the dead in Christ's name. . . .When thou work miracles, you are God's debtor; when you give alms, God is your debtor." – St. John Chrysostom

We will all see the bell ringers outside the shops; maybe participate in a food, coat, or toy drive. We love buying gifts for family and friends—this season is a season of giving. These are good things of course, but we want to be careful that we don't simply give in to consumerism. We also need to be careful not to give in to the temptation of feeding one's own ego and easing one's own conscience when doing these things. In giving to the needy, we really want to make an effort to dig deep, to make sacrifices, and reach out to our neighbor. Acts of charity should be the fruit of our prayer and fasting efforts.

Don't forget: acts of charity include hospitality. People can be very lonely this time of year, reaching out and inviting them to our homes for a meal and company is very important. Reach out to the young couple at church, or the family who would love a night out, and don't forget your priest, or simply a friend or family member you haven't spent a lot of time with. Hospitality can make a positive difference in other's lives.

Embracing the ancient Christian practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Advent Season can prepare the entire family to welcome the Messiah with open hearts in a way that all the other activities people do this time of year never will. By setting ourselves apart from the noise and hasty preparations, and focusing on readying our souls, we will find that the joy of Christmas morning will ring louder and the light of Christ will shine brighter in our lives all throughout the Season of Christmas.

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Announcements and Upcoming Events



MEET OUR NEW ORGANIST: Jacob Minns was born in February 20th, 1997 in Peru Indiana. His love of music began at the age of 6 when he began piano lessons with Mary Berkebile, and at age 8 he began organ lessons. He was later introduced to instructor Vicki Little, to further his abilities as an organist. He had performed many recitals at venues such as St. Petersburg UMC in St. Petersburg Florida, Broadway UMC in Indianapolis, St. Alban's Parish in Washington DC, and First Presbyterian Church in Columbus Indiana. Mr. Minns currently serves as organist at St. Charles Borromeo Parish of Peru, Indiana. He will be joining us at the new year.

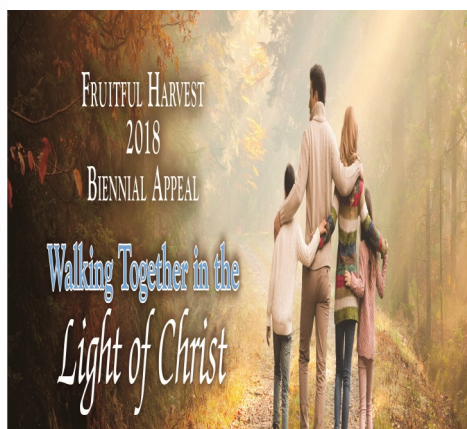
Hi Father Dominic,

I thought you'd be interested in how the proceeds from your recent bake sale are being used. Thank you so much for your support and advocacy. We have two farm worker families that lost their father/grandfather and home in a fire. We are going to focus the donation from the church on helping the 8 children in these two families. Thank you again and have a blessed Holiday!

Kimber J. Nicoletti-Martinez, MSW, LCSW

MESA Director Purdue University

December's Schoenstatt Holy Hour with Fr. Cassian Sama O.P. on Tuesday, Dec 18, 2018 at 7 PM in St Thomas Aquinas Church will be a Christmas Gift of Prayer for all family and friends who have died this year. It will include adoration, a homily, rosary and benediction and the opportunity to enroll loved one in the Golden Book of prayers.



The readings for the Second Week of Advent offer both encouragement and challenge as we reflect and prepare for the two "comings" of Christ — His coming as a baby on the great feast of Christmas, and the anticipation of His second coming at the end of time.

Our First Reading, from Baruch, is a wonderful reminder that God has triumphed over sin and death and that we — His faithful disciples — will live in the light of His glory one day. Until He comes again, we must remain faithful to Him as true disciples and good stewards of all the gifts He has given us.

While it can be tempting to give in to the materialism and calls for self-indulgence that surround us, (ironically more than ever at this time of year), this reading calls us back to the spiritual reality that this life is passing and that we are made for eternal life with God. We are called to prepare for eternal life by the way that we use our time, our talents and our treasure now.

The Gospel reading from Luke shows us how personal and detailed is God's love for humanity as He prepared the way for Christ's coming among us. We are told the precise time, place and person, John the Baptist, He appointed to announce the arrival of our Savior.

John tells us how to celebrate to the fullest this first "coming" on the feast of Christmas and how to prepare for the second coming — through repentance.

This Advent, let's turn away from any bad habits or sin that may have crept in to our lives and turn our hearts and minds back to Christ. This is what

SUNDAY OFFERING

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

ST. AUGUSTINE