

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Dear Parishioners,

I've learned, no matter what happens, life goes on with hope that tomorrow will be a little brighter. I have also learned you can tell a lot about a person by the way they handle these three things: a) a rainy day, b) lost luggage and c) tangled Christmas tree lights.

Now that we have finished Thanksgiving turkey—the tangled Christmas tree lights will soon be upon us. The joyous music, the clang of the bells, the brightly wrapped gifts and the ornate spruce tree will be constant reminders that Christmas is on the way. The Church doesn't like to jump into the birth of Christ right away. We need some time to prepare our hearts for such a wondrous coming. Thus we have Advent.

The word "Advent" is Latin for "a coming or arrival." The idea behind it is that God comes to our earthly life and lives amongst us. It is something to celebrate and rejoice because just by being in it, God has given the supreme blessing to our created world. Advent is the season for preparing. In Advent, we recognize Christ's first coming and we celebrate Christ's presence among us. The center of our Hope is the Christ child. Adults can easily pass up on the gift giving, since there is little in the way of material things that any of us really need. But for the children, that is a different story. The challenge for most parents is how do I focus less and less on the gift-giving, while focusing more and more on Christ in Christmas? You just have to start somewhere and just make it happen.

Growing up, when we hit school, on the first day of Advent, the Nuns would ask each and every one of us... "What are you giving up for Advent?" Most of the time, we would give up cookies, chocolate or TV. By giving up the things we like, we appreciated them more once Advent was over. Today, fasting and giving up sweets seems only for those on a diet!!!

Truly in 2004, we must make Advent a time for preparing for the coming of Christ. Maybe, this will be the Christmas we decide to cut back on how much we spend and on the number of gifts we buy. I know the stores won't appreciate me telling you to "cut back"...but less is better. There is not a single thing in the world I need (though, Fr Dan says my favorite raspberry colored sweater has seen better days). Talk to your adult children and your family. Tell them you are committed to spending less. You are not anxious to run to this store and that store, wasting so much of your time and energy, when you could be in vigil for the coming of Christ. Ask your family for suggestions on how to put Christ into Christmas with much less commercialism. This is how I would do it.

I would invite a shut-in for Christmas dinner. The children would make the Advent wreath and say the prayers appropriate for the season. I would root everyone out of bed early every Wednesday and take them to morning Mass with me. Sorry if you got a gift last year from me, but this year you will only get a card telling you how much I really love you and miss you. The \$20.00 Franklin you don't really need, so I sent it to the "Lord's Table" where it will be well used. Just like olden days, I piled everyone in the car on Thursday night and we all went to confession...the good, the bad and the not so perfect. Every night we took turns saying our own spontaneous grace at supper..at our house, everyone eats supper at the same time together, with the TV, pagers, cell phones and Blackberries turned OFF. On my day off, I'll call a friend who has had a real string of bad luck lately and take them to lunch. If it is pay day, I might just treat them for a free hair-do on my tab. If I can get home early from work, I plan to bake some Christmas cookies and send them over to the neighbor who just needs a little lift in her spirits. What a better time for me to clean out the "Ameda Marcus" closet...really 8 pairs of shoes are enough. This year I plan on giving 1/3 of my wardrobe to the needy..that's the 1/3 I haven't worn in 4 years and planned to use once I lost 25 pounds. I hope the children will learn the meaning of the symbols around the Jesse tree, and we can start planning how and when to set up the Christmas crib. I must get back to reading the Scriptures with the family and my favorite thing to do is to light a candle. See my mother died three years ago on the 22 December. We still had Christmas, and she was there with us. We thought it better not to curse the darkness with our loss, but to light one candle to remind us, she is with the LIGHT. So do put the light back into Christmas, by putting Christ front and center.

Fr. Joe

We extend a warm welcome to everyone and are happy that you are able to join us in our celebration of the Eucharist.

If you are new to St. Mary Parish, please fill out the form found on the front of this bulletin, return it to the Parish Office and we will be happy to mail you a registration packet. If you have recently moved, please let us know.

Offertory Envelopes 2005

Why wait? Avoid long lines! You may stop by the Parish Office any time during business hours (Monday-Friday) to pick up your box of Offertory Envelopes.

PRIMER DOMINGO DE ADVIENTO

28 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2004

Estimados Feligreses:

¡Que la gracia de nuestro Señor y sus bendiciones estén siempre con ustedes!

Hoy comienza un nuevo Año Litúrgico en la Iglesia con la Temporada de Adviento. Este es un tiempo corto de 4 semanas donde nos preparamos espiritualmente para la Navidad- Dios que viene a la tierra a quedarse para siempre en nuestras vidas. Por eso, la decoración del altar nos indica un cambio para ayudarnos a entrar en la experiencia de estas 4 semanas. El color morado nos indica cambio y penitencia- preparando nuestros corazones para que estén limpios para recibir al niño Dios.

La Corona de Adviento es otro símbolo que nos ayuda a seguir las 4 semanas, por eso hay cuatro velas, una por cada Domingo de Adviento. La primera vela se le llama la vela de la Esperanza, porque aguardamos con ansias al Mesías, la segunda vela es la vela de la Preparación en nuestras vidas, la tercera es la de color rosa y se enciende en la tercera semana- es la vela del gozo y la alegría porque ya falta una semana para el nacimiento de Jesús y la cuarta vela es la del Amor para el cuarto Domingo de Adviento. Todas ellas al ser encendidas avivan en nosotros, la esperanza de nuestro Redentor, la preparación, el gozo y el amor de celebrar la Navidad- ¡ Dios con nosotros para siempre! .

Y las Lecturas de este primer Domingo de Adviento nos piden que caminemos a la luz del Señor, que es hora de despertar, que nos revistamos de Cristo, que dejemos nos dice la segunda Carta a los Romanos: los vicios, renunciemos a las envidias y todo lo que nos daña.

Entonces, ¿Cómo podemos hacer esto que dice San Pablo en estas 4 semanas de Adviento para estar listos nuestros corazones para recibir a Jesús?

Vivir la Navidad es celebrar y regalar paz, amor, justicia, perdón, humildad y solidaridad.

La Navidad es el gran Regalo a nosotros, es un don de Dios, porque nos ha dado a su único Hijo que viene a salvarnos, y a darnos la vida verdadera. Y, a veces, corremos el riesgo de poner todas nuestras energías en irnos de compras y en el consumismo nos olvidamos de por qué celebramos lo que celebramos.

Por eso...

"Si tienes amigos, búscalos, la Navidad es encuentro"

"Si tienes enemigos, busca reconciliarte, la Navidad es paz"

"Si hay pobres a tu lado, ayúdalos, la Navidad es compasión y amor"

"Si tienes soberbia, sepúltala, la Navidad es humildad"

"Si tienes dudas, págalas, la Navidad es Justicia"

"Si tienes pecados, conviértete con un corazón arrepentido, la Navidad es gracia"

"Si tienes errores, corrígelos, la Navidad es verdad"

"Si tienes odio, transfórmalos, la Navidad es amor"

"Si hay envidias, celos y rencores, sepúltalos, el niño Jesús quiere nacer en tu corazón"

Oremos cada día en este tiempo de Adviento, para que nos podamos preparar espiritualmente, y que al llegar la Navidad nuestro corazón esté rebosante del amor de Dios y que podamos decir como Santa Teresa: "Con Dios todo y sin Dios nada"

Hasta la próxima

Hilda G. Porcella



Les damos a todos la más cálida bienvenida y nos alegramos con los que nos visitan y se unen con nosotros en la celebración de la Eucaristía este fin de semana.

Si usted es nuevo en esta comunidad parroquial, le invitamos a llenar la forma incluida en este boletín y le enviaremos por correo el paquete de membresía.

FIESTA DE LA INMACULADA CONCEPCIÓN

El próximo Miércoles, 8 de Diciembre, tendremos la festividad de La Inmaculada Concepción de María-Patrona de los Estados Unidos. La Misa en Español será a las 7:00 de la noche. Recuerde que es fiesta de guardar.

EL ARBOL DE LA ESPERANZA



Una vez más vamos a tener el "Árbol de la Esperanza," el cual estará en el templo y en la capilla durante el tiempo de Adviento. Como en el pasado, los invitamos a que tomen de la canasta un papelito que sugiere lo que usted puede regalar. Cuando lo traiga, favor de pegar un ornamento al regalo indicando así lo que es, y los invitamos a depositarlo junto al Árbol. Todo será entregado por medio del Centro Familia de San José.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~~~~~ NOVEMBER 28, 2004

ST. MARY SCHOOL OFFICE: 842-2827

Save the Date

Mark your calendars for an evening of great wine, delicious appetizers and good friends at Hollister's Award-Winning Leal Vineyards on February 5, 2005 from 7:00-10:00 p.m. Watch for details and reservation information coming soon!

Proceeds from the evening benefit the school's growing Endowment Fund.

While the Family is Home for the Holidays . . .

Remind them to make plans for the annual Alumni Basketball Tournament, scheduled for Saturday, April 9. If we can gather four women's teams, we will play games on Friday night, too. Players are limited to those who have attended St. Mary School. Watch for more information, or phone Vicki in the Development Office at 842-8425.

CATECHETICAL MINISTRY

OFFICE: (408) 847-2652

There are no Religious Education classes this Sunday. But, yes, there are Religious Education classes on Monday and Tuesday.

Please mark your calendars for the Religious Education Advent play which will be presented on Thursday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the church. The children of Religious Education are working very hard on this presentation and would like to share it with the entire parish.

Child Safety

We still see parents dropping their children off for class on Church Street, having them run across the street. For your child's safety and for your own safety, won't you please take the time to park in the church parking lot and walk them to and from class?

Jr. High Religious Education

The next class for Jr. High Religious Education will be on Thursday, December 2 from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

PRE-K RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

We are interested in starting a program for preschool children (ages 3-4) during Mass time. If you are interested in more information about this program, we invite you to call Michelle at 842-8004 or Josie at 848-9978.

Christmas Pageant: All children from age 5 and adults are invited to participate in proclaiming the Christmas Gospel in play format at the Christmas Eve Mass. There will be a practice next Sunday, December 5 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. The final practice will be on Sunday, December 19 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Please come to the practice if you are interested in participating.

The Holiday Boutique
sponsored by
St. Mary School Mothers' Guild
Saturday, December 4 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Cullen Hall (first street entrance)
\$1 Entry Fee
**Proceeds benefit St. Mary School programs
and its Endowment.**
**For vendor information,
contact Kim Toves at 847-9047**



Because of the Thanksgiving Day holiday, there will be no Youth Group this Sunday, November 28.

The next Youth Group meeting will be Sunday, December 5 in Cullen Hall from 7:00-8:30 p.m. All high school aged youth are invited and encouraged to attend.

Sunday Offertory Envelopes for 2005 will be available after all the Masses next weekend, December 4/5. If you can help distribute the envelopes, please call Magdalena at 847-5151. Thank you in advance!

CONFIRMATION

Craig & Emily Morris
(408) 848-6020

Confirmation Year II will meet next Sunday, December 5, beginning at 9:30 a.m. in the Common Room at St. Francis Center. Following class, the group will attend the 11:30 a.m. Mass.

Confirmation Year I will meet on Sunday, December 12. They, too, will begin their class at 9:30 a.m. in the Common Room at St. Francis Center and then will attend the 11:30 a.m. Mass together.

NOTE THE NEW TIME

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IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday, December 8 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This patronal feast of the Church in the United States continues to be a Holy Day of Obligation. All are bound by the obligation to celebrate Mass on this day. The Mass schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, December 7

7:00 p.m. Vigil (English)

Wednesday, December 8

7:15 a.m. (English)

9:00 a.m. (English)

12:10 p.m. (Spanish)

7:00 p.m. (English)

TREE OF HOPE



Our Tree of Hope will be in the church and chapel throughout Advent. We invite you to take a slip of paper with a gift item printed on it. When you bring back the item with the printed slip of paper taped to it, we ask that you place it around the altar. We also ask that you bring an ornament from home to place on the tree.

All that is donated will be shared through St. Joseph Family Center.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal for 2004 is coming to a close. If you still have an outstanding pledge, we ask that you make every attempt to complete this pledge. If there are any questions please contact the Parish Office at 847-5151.

WEEKLY COLLECTION REPORT

November 20/21

Weekly Goal: \$ 21,000

Actual: \$ 15,703

Campaign for Human Development
\$3,194

Thank you for your continued support to the works of our Parish.

FOOD COLLECTION FOR THE POOR

Thank you for your generosity in our Thanksgiving collections. The food donated to St. Joseph Family Center at Thanksgiving was very much appreciated. During these weeks of Advent we will continue to take up donations of food in preparation for Christmas. You may bring your donations of non-perishable foods to Church on Sunday. Turkeys, hams, fresh fruit and vegetables may be delivered directly to the Center at 7950 Church Street. For more information, please call 842-6662.

FOUR MINUTES AFTER MASS

After the 8:15 a.m. Mass, we invite you to stay for Four Minutes After Mass to listen to Fr. Dan talk on the topic, The Mass. Four Minutes After Mass was developed in the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan.

At the conclusion of the 8:15 a.m. Advent Masses, we will sing one verse of our sending forth song while those who wish to leave will process out. Those who choose to stay will listen to Fr. Dan talk about the Mass. Fr. Dan promises to keep it to four minutes!

THE LORD'S TABLE

This Sunday is the fourth Sunday of the month, St. Mary's Day at The Lord's Table. This means the parishioners of St. Mary Parish are responsible for setting up, cooking, serving and cleaning up for the Lord's Table. Meet in the gym kitchen at 3:30 p.m. if you can spend some time (no talent required) this Sunday helping at the Lord's Table.

If you are interested in helping at the Lord's Table any Tuesday, Thursday or Sunday, please call Sue Moon at 847-9849.

Masses for the Week

An offering to the work of the Parish has been made in memory of, or on behalf of, the following persons who are hereby included in the special prayers of our community at our daily Masses this week.

November 2004

Mon 29 7:15am Joe Bettencourt
8:30am Rosa Cunha

Tue 30 7:15am John & Florence Rizzi
8:30am Ramon Santa Maria

December

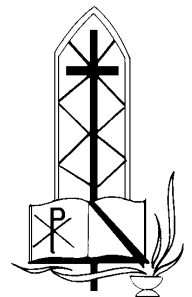
Wed 1 7:15am Carmen & Hijinia Carranza
8:30am Dell Bettencourt
12:10am Ramiro Garza (A)

Thu 2 7:15am Leonardo Hernandez
8:30am Jose Faria + Jose Tapia

Fri 3 7:15am Mary Garrigan (A)
8:30am Melecio & Elena Flores

Sat 4 8:30am Frank Ciacco

(A) Anniversary of Death (MM) Months Mind



The priests of the Parish celebrate Sunday Eucharist for the intentions of all the Parish. Please pray for the ill of the Parish and for the recently deceased.