

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

The Collect of the 4th Week of Advent, a masterfully crafted prayer dating from the eighth century, comprehensively, “situates the mystery of Christ’s incarnation and birth in the context of his saving death and its full effect: our resurrection to glory.” The prayer, which will be familiar to those who are accustomed to praying the Angelus, is as follows:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,
your grace into our hearts,
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your
Son was made known by the message of an
Angel, may by his Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

This prayer “admirably binds together the two Advents of Christ and in the final petition connects the last Sunday of the season with the first two on which we prayed to be at Christ’s side in his kingdom and to be admitted to his company in heaven.” We thus see that the reason Christ, the King of Kings, came to us in humility, born of the Virgin in Bethlehem “was His immense mercy, His multiplied compassion, His abundant charity,” which finds its ultimate expression in the Cross. St. Bernard goes on to explain that although we should have gone to Him, he instead came to us, because:

“there stood a twofold impediment in the way... our eyes were heavy, and He “dwelt in light inaccessible.” We lay as paralytics on our beds, and could not raise ourselves to the Divine elevation. Wherefore this most benign Savior and Physician of souls descended to us from His lofty throne, and tempered His brightness to the weakness of our sight. He clothed Himself with His most glorious and spotless body as with the shade of a lantern, thus tempering to us His splendor.”

The Incarnation is an act both of supreme humility and supreme mercy. As St. Irenaeus points out so beautifully, “the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man: so that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God.” The wood of the Manger, and the wood of the Cross, are intimately bound up in each other, for in one manner of speaking they are but one action of divine providence undertaken for our salvation; the Incarnation is the beginning of the kenosis which will be completed on the Cross when Christ breathes out the words “*consummatum est*”. Each year we journey liturgically speaking from the Manger to the Cross and Resurrection, walking with Christ through His life on Earth and

rehearsing, hopefully, our journey in communion with Him to salvation. Indeed, even at each Mass we see a microcosm of this year long liturgical drama, for Christ is expected, comes, is broken and offered, and then those who are being sanctified participate in Holy Communion which is the Sacrament (sign) of the Heavenly Communion for which we long.

In closing, let us return once more to the meaning of Advent as a whole, which contemplates the mystery of God made flesh, in order to move us to desire ardently communion with Him for the sake of our salvation. Writing about the choice of “Adventus” as the name for the season, Ratzinger comments:

“The Christians adopted this word in order to express their special relationship to Jesus Christ. For Christians, he was the king who had entered this wretched province Earth and bestowed on it the gift of his visit; and they believed that he was present in the liturgical assembly. In general terms, when they used this word, they intended to say: God is here. He has not withdrawn from the world. He has not left us alone. Although we cannot see him and take hold of him as we do with objects in this world, nevertheless he is here, and he comes to us in many ways.”

Thus we recognize that our ours is a faith that sees in the world, in persons, and most especially in the Liturgy, small comings of Christ which prefigure his ultimate coming, at the end of time, and which were made possible and were prefigured by his first coming in the Incarnation. This is Advent in a nutshell – an opening of the eyes, so we can see, the Advents, big and small, in our lives, that we, “to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel,” might live in communion with Him now and forever.

Bibliography

St. Bernard, *Sermons of St. Bernard on Advent & Christmas: Including the Famous Treatise on the Incarnation Called “Missus Est”* London; Manchester; Glasgow; New York; Cincinnati; Chicago: R. & T. Washbourne; Benziger Bros., 1909

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Dalmis, Irénée Henri, Pierre Jounel, and Aimé Georges Martimort. *The Liturgy and Time. The Church at Prayer*. Translated by O’Connell, Matthew J. Vol. IV. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986.

St. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*. as translated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*. Vatican City: The Holy See, 1964.

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Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *Seek that which is Above : Meditations through the Year*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986. Regan, Patrick. *Advent to Pentecost : Comparing the Seasons in the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2012.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “Commentary on the Proper Prayers of Advent from the Roman Missal.” Accessed December 1, 2015.

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*Faith Formation*

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our students, parents and Catechists.
We'll see you all back on January 3rd at 6:30pm



End of Year Giving: Thank you to all who have given end-of-year gifts to help us to bridge the gap between our weekly offertory and the current weekly expenses. If you have not yet given, I invite you to discern how God is calling you to support your parish during the Christmas Season. You can easily make an [online donation here](#) or drop off donations to the parish office. Thank you so much for your support. (If you are registered with the parish and have not received a letter inviting you to consider a donation, please call the parish office to make sure we have your current address).



Thank you to everyone who came out to decorate the Church for Christmas!

All the flowers that were ordered for loved ones are beautiful and truly bring the Church to life!

Merry Christmas to all!



21ST ANNUAL ANGELS GALA



**FRIDAY
JANUARY 12, 2024
DOORS OPEN AT 6PM
EVENT STARTS AT 7PM**



WINTER COAT DRIVE

Help our Social Outreach Ministry collect coats that will be donated to Churches Touches Lives for Christ (CTLIC) for those in need.

Together, we can make sure everyone stays warm this winter!

New and Gently used coats of all sizes will be accepted.

Donation boxes will be located in the Narthex of the Church.

Join us on January 12, 2024 at the Temple Cultural Activities Center for an evening of compassion and celebration at the Our Lady of the Angels Maternity Shelter's 21st Annual Angels Gala.

It is a remarkable fundraising event dedicated to making a lasting difference in the lives of mothers and infants in need.

For more information or to secure your sponsorship, please contact gala@olams.com or www.ladyoftheangels.networkforgood.com

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

Dec. 30th & 31st 2023 and Jan. 1st 2024**5:30 PM Mass**

Lector: R. Colburn
 EM: L. & M. Lockhart, E. Bigon
 Greeters: J. Sladacek, B. Lenart, R. Wilde
 Altar Servers: M. Collins, O. & A. Ware

7:30 AM Mass

Lector: A. Castillo
 EM: Dcn. M. Hoelscher, R. Coufal,
 R. Castillo, D. Kaminski
 Greeters: R. Coufal, J. Flinn, J. Wimberley,
 L. Lagut
 Altar Servers: H. Guenat-Ramirez

9:30 AM Mass

Lector: S. McAtee
 EM: J. & Je. Glover, B. McAtee, D. Keller
 Greeters: K. Bartz, E. & T. Degenhardt,
 M. Jimenez
 Altar Servers: T. & X. Glover, A. Sandoval,
 A. Gonzales

11:30 AM Mass

Lector: A. Cabiness
 EM: A. Payne, J. Solis
 Greeters: R. Krumnow, B. & D. Stewart
 Altar Servers: A. & S. Upchurch, A. Pelawatta

12:00 AM (Midnight) Mass

Lector: A. Obu-Anukam
 EM: Dcn. M. Hoelscher, R. Henderson,
 M. Hudkins
 Greeters:
 Altar Servers: L. Henderson, R. Sagredo

January 1st, 2024**9:30 AM Mass**

Lector: P. Binsol
 EM: J. & N. Glover, B. McAtee
 Greeters:
 Altar Servers: K. Edwards, R. Mosmeyer

**THE WEEK AHEAD**

Date	Event	Location	Time
Mon. Dec 25 th	Christmas Mass	Church	9:30 am
	Ministries will not be meeting this week to celebrate Christmas And New Year	Merry Christmas	
Tuesday - Friday	No Adoration 12/25 - 1/1	Adoration Chapel	
Sun. Dec 31 st	Black-eyed Pea Party	Regina Caeli Room	Following Midnight Mass

Church Office Closed

Monday, Dec. 25th - Monday, Jan. 1st
 We will re-open Tues., Jan. 2nd at 8:00am

**CHALICE FOR VOCATIONS**

Open to all parishioners.

To sign-up, call Debra Hollingsworth
 at (713) 586-9800.

Thank you for participating in this prayer initiative
 and may God richly bless you with every good gift as
 you pray for priestly vocations!

Dec 31st	Bruce & Stephanie McAtee	9:30am
Jan 7th	Brian & Patricia St. Amour	11:30am
Jan 13th	Debra King	5:30pm
Jan 21st	Vicki & Nestor Centeno	9:30am
Jan 28th	Rex & Gladys Hengst	9:30am

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Parish Giving

December 17, 2023

Sunday Collection	\$	11,187.64
Parish School	\$	99.00
Building Fund	\$	108.00
Ret. Clergy & Religious	\$	51.00
Immaculate Conception	\$	10.00
World Home Mission	\$	11.00
Helping Hands	\$	167.00
Total	\$	11,633.64

Note: totals include online giving

* Weekly Operating Expenses: \$11,500.00



Join us for our Annual
New Year's Eve
"Black-eye Pea Party"

Dec. 31, 2023
immediately following
Midnight Mass
in the Regina Caeli
Room



December 25th - January 1st 2024

Monday	9:30AM	For the People
Tuesday	NO MASS	
Wednesday	NO MASS	
Thursday	8:15AM	† Bill & † MaryAnn Colburn † Isabel Huffman Recio † Joshua Peterson † Maria Elena Pedroza † Erwin Ketterman
Friday	5:30PM	For the People Villamaria Family † Msgr. Victor Goertz Tony Sunigat & Helen Jimenez
Saturday	8:15AM 5:30PM	
Sunday	7:30AM 9:30AM 11:30AM 12:00AM	(Midnight Mass) Christopher & Mason Warren Jay & Joyce Wimberley
Monday	9:30AM	

CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARY'S

Mass for 4th Sunday of Advent (12/24)
5:30 PM (Sat), 7:30 & 9:30 AM (No 11:30 AM Mass)

Christmas Eve

Mass for the Vigil of Christmas 4:30 PM and 6:30 PM

Vespers and the Office of Readings 10:30 PM

Singing of Christmas Carols 11:30 PM

Solemn Christmas Mass during the Night

12:00 AM, Midnight

Christmas Day

Lauds (Morning Prayer) 8:30 AM

Mass of Christmas Day 9:30 AM

Octave of Christmas

Dec. 26 -27 No Daily Masses

Dec. 28 Daily Mass, 5:30 PM

Dec. 29 Daily Mass, 8:15 AM

Dec. 31 Normal Sunday Mass Schedule
Holy Hour with Vespers, and Office of Readings, 11 PM

Jan. 1 Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Mass, 12:00 AM

Black Eyed Pea Party, 1 AM

Mass, 9:30 AM

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Jan. 1 Mass, 12:00 AM

Black Eyed Pea Party, 1 AM

Mass, 9:30 AM

Solemnity of the Epiphany

Sunday, Jan. 7, Normal Sunday Schedule

Join us to continue celebrating with the

arrival of the Wise Men! Bring a friend to

Mass today and join us for breakfast

afterwards.

