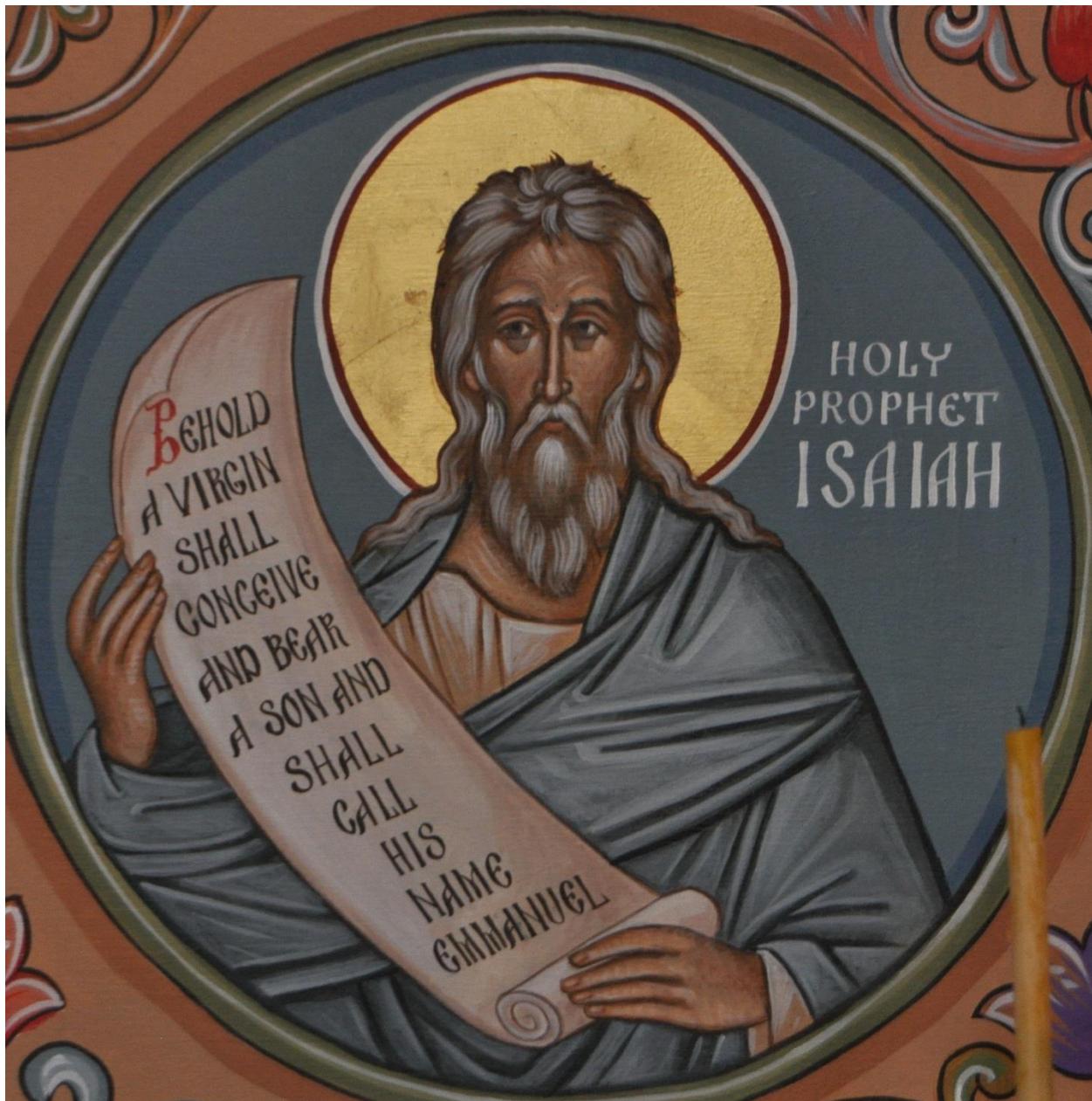


**PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS**  
**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)**

**30 NOVEMBER – 1 DECEMBER 2019**



**SUNDAY REFLECTION**

'Look up and raise your heads' (Lk. 21:28). Advent creates people, new people. We too are supposed to become new people in Advent. Look up, you whose gaze is fixed on this earth, who are spellbound by the little events and changes on the face of the earth. Look up to these words, you who have turned away from heaven disappointed. Look up, you whose eyes are heavy with tears and who are heavy and who are crying over the fact that the earth has

gracelessly torn us away. Look up, you who, burdened with guilt, cannot lift your eyes. Look up, your redemption is drawing near. Something different from what you see daily will happen, just be aware, be watchful, wait just another short moment. Wait and something quite new will break over you: God will come.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer *God is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmastide*

**STEWARDSHIP:** The Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect. Good stewards know that they are accountable to God for all they have and are, and they strive to live in readiness for His coming.

Henry Manning

"Time is full of eternity. As we use it so shall we be."

### **ISAIAH OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET FOR THE ADVENT SEASON:**

(Icon located at entrance to the church)

Isaiah, the son of Amoz, was married and had two children. He was called in the year King Uzziah died (740 BC). His ministry was a long one, during the reign of four kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Isaiah means "Yah is salvation".

Isaiah was sent primarily to Judah, although his message concerns the northern kingdom of Israel as well. He lived through the awful days of the civil war between Judah and Israel in 734-732 BC.

Isaiah is considered by some to be the greatest Old Testament prophet. His disciples continued to transmit this teachings long after he had died. Isaiah also looked beyond his own time to the coming exile of Judah and the deliverance that God would provide. Jesus quoted from the Book of Isaiah often, which is not surprising, considering that salvation is a central theme of the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah's book is the first of the Major Prophets, and the longest of all the Prophets.

#### **Old Testament Prophet for the Advent Season**

**Isaiah's Advent message.** Isaiah is the prophet who guides our journey through Advent as we prepare for Christmas. Advent is a season of joyful anticipation, and Isaiah invites us to look forward to the coming of the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord. Advent is a liturgical season with a strong penitential tone, and Isaiah urges us to straighten out our crooked ways, tear down our mountains of misdeeds, and fill in the valleys of our bad habits. It is a time to turn away from sin and receive forgiveness. Advent is also about the arrival of the reign of God, a kingdom of justice and peace, and Isaiah urges us to obey the Lord's instruction, walk in the ways of peace, follow the promptings of the Spirit, and be just in thought, word and deed. Advent is a time to be filled with hope, rejoice in glad tidings and welcome the Messiah.

**Messianic expectation.** The prophet Isaiah eagerly looked forward to the day when the Messiah would come. He, along with all of Israel, was keenly aware of the promise that God made to Moses: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen, and will put my words into his mouth; he shall tell them all that I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18); a promise also made to King David: “I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me” (2 Samuel 7:12b,14).

**The Immanuel prophecies.** The three Immanuel prophecies are unique to the prophet Isaiah and are found in his Messianic Oracle, chapters 6 to 12. These cherished texts stand at the forefront of the Advent season because they anticipate the coming of Immanuel, God with us, and the arrival of the ideal king, the one who would decisively change the course of history, rule with justice and bring peace. The first prophecy describes the birth of Immanuel: “The virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). The second prophecy describes his dominion: “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful” (Isaiah 9:5-6a). The third prophecy describes the justice of his rule: “A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicted. Justice shall be the band around his waist” (Isaiah 11:1,2a,4a,5a).

**The Advent prophet.** Isaiah is the prophet of Advent, and excerpts from his book are the most-used texts for the first readings of the Masses leading up to Christmas.

**Advent Sundays.** In the three-year Lectionary cycle, there is a total of 12 Advent Sundays, and readings from the prophet Isaiah are proclaimed the most often, seven times, all four Sundays in Year A and the first three Sundays of Year B. In Year C, the first readings are taken from four different Old Testament prophets: Jeremiah, Baruch, Zephaniah and Micah. Isaiah’s voice rings out over all the others as the prophet of Advent.

**Advent weekdays.** Isaiah is also the most-quoted prophet on Advent weekdays. Of the 17 daily Masses over the first three weeks, passages from Isaiah are proclaimed 14 times: six times the first week, five the second, and three the third. In the eight-day octave immediately prior to Christmas, Dec. 17-24, Isaiah is quoted only once, on Dec. 20, while the other first readings are chosen from a variety of sources.

**The Liturgy of the Hours.** The selection of readings in the Breviary makes an emphatic statement regarding Isaiah’s importance. Every Scripture text for the Office of Readings for every day of Advent is taken from Isaiah. Moreover, many of the readings for morning prayer, daytime prayer, midday prayer and midafternoon prayer, as well as a number of the responsories, are taken from Isaiah.

**The manger scene.** The ox and donkey that are present near the manger in many Nativity sets are included because of a verse in Isaiah: “The ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master’s manger” (Isaiah 1:3a).

## **READINGS SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**8 DEC '19**

**Is. 11:1-10:** Isaiah gives a description of the Lord who comes to us at Christmas, filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Advent let us open our hearts to welcome the coming Lord and the challenges He brings to us personally and as communities.

**Rom. 15:4-9:** Paul tells us that the Advent preparations give us hope. They present us with concrete examples of the life to which we must give ourselves, and they tell us that God will guide us and help us to persevere in these teachings that Jesus brings in the Christmas season. May we respond with enthusiasm and dedication.

**Mt. 3:1-12:** The gospel tells us that the Lord we await in this Advent season will baptize us with the Holy Spirit and with fire, giving a new direction to our lives. he also come as universal judge who expects to find that we have lived faithfully to the teachings He gives us.

## **COMMENTARY ON THE PROPER PRAYERS OF ADVENT FROM THE ROMAN MISSAL**

### **Second Sunday of Advent**

#### **Collect**

Almighty and merciful God,  
may no earthly undertaking hinder those  
who set out in haste to meet your Son,  
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom  
gain us admittance to His company.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

#### **COMMENTARY**

- In the Gospel this Sunday John the Baptist tells us to prepare the way of the Lord. He is talking not about the babe in the manger but about the adult Christ soon to begin His public ministry. This prayer presents our response to Christ's call to join His company.
- The prayer first appears in the seventh-century Roman parish tradition and in seven subsequent manuscripts before it is lost to the liturgical tradition, until reclaimed for the 1970 Latin edition of the *Roman Missal*.
- As we gather together to meet Christ in the assembly, in the word, in the ministers and in the Eucharist our efforts simply to arrive at church with the proper disposition provide the context for this prayer about hastening to meet Christ. We gather from every walk of life and these earthly undertakings are not cast in a negative light except in their ability to hinder us for our single-minded pursuit of Christ and His company.
- We learn heavenly wisdom in the liturgy of the word when we hear the voice of Christ, the Wisdom of God. This heavenly wisdom, in turn, helps us to conduct our earthly undertakings in a way that does not hinder our single-minded pursuit of Christ and His company.
- We gain admittance to Christs company when we are baptized as Christians, and time and time again when we join with the baptized in the liturgical celebration where we form the Body of Christ, the Church in action. We gain admittance to His company when we share in communion. We gain admittance to Christs company when we

welcome Him who comes to us in our neighbor in their need, which is the only criterion given in the Gospel for the final judgment and admittance to the company of saints.

#### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings,  
and since we have no merits to plead our cause,  
come, we pray, to our rescue  
with the protection of your mercy.  
Through Christ our Lord.

#### **COMMENTARY**

- The technical language used in this prayer suggests that we stand before the Magistrate in need of someone to plead our cause. The merits of our case Alone are inadequate to our situation.
- The prayer appears in both the Roman Papal and parish traditions of the seventh century, but only the parish version has the words *of your mercy*, which have been preserved in the current prayer.
- While we offer prayers and offerings however inadequate and ask that the Lord be pleased with these. Our prayers and offerings, however, cannot be used to manipulate God into acting on our behalf, nor are they intended to do so.
- Rather, we stand defenseless and plead that the Lord come to rescue us not out of Obligation but because of the abundance of divine mercy. While other prayers over the gifts indicate an ongoing and reciprocal exchange of gifts between God and humanity, this prayer emphasizes the utter gratuity of the divine gift.
- This prayer is offered right before the Eucharistic Prayer begins, and so anticipates the coming of the Lord in the Eucharist who gives His Body as our daily bread and His Blood as our protection. This bodily self-gift in the form of food and drink that we share rescues us. In anticipation of this utter generosity of the divine gift we offer what we have, prayers of thanksgiving with simple offerings of bread and wine and our ministry of service to our neighbor in their need.
- From this experience we learn that each of us is called to give of ourselves often in relationships that are not mutual and to give not because others have earned what we are capable of giving but because we have learned the ways of abundant mercy.

#### **Prayer after Communion**

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,  
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,  
that, through our partaking in this mystery,  
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth  
and hold firm to the things of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.

#### **COMMENTARY**

- We ask that the communion we have just shared teach us how to conduct ourselves in

daily life.

- The early Roman parish tradition assigned this prayer to the first of six Sundays of Advent, but by the time it was included in the seventh-century Papal sacramentary, Advent in Rome had been shortened to four Sundays.
  - The prayer begins by reflecting on the communion we have just shared. It is called both food and spiritual nourishment. To partake of the Eucharistic food and drink is to partake in the mystery of Christ's body and blood, and we do so as a community, itself the body of Christ, the Church.
  - As we prepare to return to our daily lives, we pray that partaking in this mystery will instruct us in our daily conduct. The Eucharist teaches us that food, as a product of human labor, is intended to be shared, and that this eucharistic food is at one and the same time the gift of the divine self.
  - We learn to value the personal investment inherent in bread and wine and all products of human labor. We learn that offering these simple gifts to God is an expression of offering ourselves to God in response to the personal self-gift of God to us. Thus we partake in this mystery by sharing in this exchange of personal self-gift that is conducted in a community shared goods.
  - The things of heaven include this partaking of communion essential to the Triune Unity of God. We partake of communion in the Church through our vocation, the specific way in which we give ourselves to God and neighbor.
  - Partaking in this exchange teaches us to perceive and judge wisely the genuine gift of ones self out of communion with others.

Thomas Macaulay

“The measure of a person’s real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.”

## DECEMBER INTENTION

The Future of the Very Young. That every country determine to take the necessary measures to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.



ADVENT

## **The Two Parts of Advent**

### **Part 1: up until 16 December**

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 of 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 the world for us.

## **ADVENT WREATH**

The lights of the candles on the Advent Wreath break through the darkness, reminding us of the Light of Christ that we anticipate during this holy season. Where did this tradition come from, of lighting four candles in an evergreen wreath to mark the weeks preceding Christmas? Like many of our Church traditions, the use of candles in the midst of late fall and winter was originally a pagan tradition. Pre-Germanic peoples used wreaths with lit candles during the dark and cold December days as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended sunlight days of spring. In a similar vein, Scandinavians lighted candles that were placed around a wheel, and prayers were offered to the god of light to turn the ‘wheel of the earth’ back toward the sun to lengthen the days and restore warmth.”

In the middle ages, the Germanic peoples began incorporating a lighted wreath into the Christian season of Advent. It didn’t gain widespread popularity until the 1800s and it wasn’t until the 1900s that German immigrants brought the tradition to America.

The Advent Wreath is very symbolic. The evergreens used for the wreath itself are a reminder of continuous life. The shaping of them into a circle reinforces that meaning. The circle is also a sign of everlasting life as well as the eternity of God.

### **The Meaning of Advent Candles**

The candles represent Jesus coming as the light in darkness. One candle is lit each Sunday until all four candles are lit, and sometimes a fifth candle is lit on Christmas. As Christmas draws nearer, each candle brings a little more light into the darkness.

Each of the candles represents an aspect of preparation during the season of Advent:

**1. The Candle of Hope**

*Color: Purple*

Purple is the primary color associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church it symbolizes penance, preparation, and sacrifice. During the first week of Advent, we look forward to Jesus' coming with hope.

**2. The Candle of Peace**

*Color: Purple*

During this second week of Advent, we reflect on our lives and work on becoming better-versions-of-ourselves in preparation for Jesus' coming.

**3. The Candle of Joy**

*Color: Pink*

This third candle is pink, symbolizing anticipation and rejoicing. During the third week of Advent, we are filled with joy for the near arrival of Jesus on Christmas day.

**4. The Candle of Love**

*Color: Purple*

During this final week of Advent we rejoice in the endless love that God has for us, which is made apparent in the birth of his Son:

### **BAMBINELLI SUNDAY (Third Sunday of Advent 14-15 Dec)**

Pope St. John Paul II, during his papacy, instituted the celebration of "Bambinelli Sunday" on the Third Sunday of Advent – a day on which children from Rome bring to St. Peter's Square the figurine of the Christ Child from their families' Nativity sets. Then, following the Sunday Angelus address, the Holy Father blesses the statues of Baby Jesus which the children will take back to homes to be place under their Christmas trees. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have continued the practice.

Once again, as in past years the children of the parish are invited to bring the Christ Child figure from their family nativity scene to be blessed on Bambinelli Sunday (Third Sunday 14-15 Dec.). the blessing will be conducted at all Masses celebrated that weekend.

### **PRAYERS**

#### **Week 1, Hope**

Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen

#### **Advent Prayer for Families**

Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together as a family this Advent. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to your son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in you. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to you. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of your love. Amen

O God, Who gladdens us by the annual expectation of our Redemption, grant that we, who now receive with joy Your only-begotten Son as our Redeemer, may behold Him without fear when He comes as our judge, even the same Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.



### **Pope: Pre-Mass Time Is Meant for Silent Prayer, Not Chitchat**

Pope Francis recently made an interesting statement regarding the importance of the practice of silence.

Prayer is, 'first and foremost dialogue, a personal relationship with God,' Francis said Nov. 15.

VATICAN CITY — On Wednesday, Pope Francis called out the common habit of chatting with people before Mass, stressing that this is a time for silent prayer, when we prepare our hearts for an encounter with the Lord.

"When we go to Mass, maybe we arrive five minutes before, and we start to chitchat with those in front of us," the Pope said Nov. 15. However, "it is not a moment for chitchat."

"It is a moment of silence for preparing ourselves for dialogue, a time for the heart to collect itself in order to prepare for the encounter with Jesus," he said, adding that "silence is so important."

Continuing his new catechesis on the Eucharist, the Pope recalled his message the week prior, that the Mass is not a show, but a place where we encounter the Lord. In this encounter, he said, silence is what "prepares us and accompanies us."

But to really understand this, first we have to answer a question, he said. And that is: What is prayer?

Prayer is, "first and foremost dialogue, a personal relationship with God," he said. And in prayer, just like in any dialogue, it needs moments of silence "together with Jesus." This, he

said, is because it is only in the “mysterious silence of God” that his word can resound in our hearts.

Francis explained that prayer is something that Jesus himself taught us to do, first of all by example, when in the Gospels he withdraws to a secluded place to pray. And second, he teaches us again when he tells his disciples that the first word in knowing how to pray is “Father.”

This is “so simple,” the Pope said. “So we have to learn ‘Father.’” Then we must take on the attitude of a small child, one full of trust and confidence, knowing that God “remembers you and takes care of you,” he said.

The second attitude we should take is one of childlike surprise and wonder. The child, he said, “always asks a thousand questions because he wants to discover the world; in our relationship with the Lord, in prayer,” he said, “open the heart to wonder.”

He noted that many say they don’t have time to pray. “We lose sight of what is fundamental: our life of the heart, our spiritual life, our life of prayer with the Lord.”

However, Jesus surprises us in truth by loving us and calling us even in our weaknesses, he said, adding that just as Christ called his disciples, he also calls us to him at each Mass.

“This is, therefore, the greatest grace: to be able to experience the Mass, the Eucharist. It is the privileged moment to be with Jesus, and through him, with God.”

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR ADVENT

We will be returning to our usual schedule for this Season:

### Weekday Masses

Monday – Friday	Mass 6:30 a.m. Confession 7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Mass 8:30 a.m. (Beginning with Morning Prayer)
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Thursday Evening	Confession 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. Mass 6:30 p.m. (Beginning with Evening Prayer)
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Friday Evening	Adoration and confession 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	Mass 8:30 a.m. (Beginning with Morning Prayer)

### Confessions

As indicated between the morning Masses, before the Thursday evening Mass and during the Friday evening Adoration  
Saturday Afternoon 1:30-4:30 p.m.

December 6 First Friday confessions 5:00 p.m. followed at 7:00 p.m. with Mass and Benediction

## DECEMBER 9 VESPERS FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

(This year the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 Dec. is not Celebrated as a Holy Day of Obligation since it falls on a Sunday.)  
In honor of this feast of the patron of the U.S. which has been

Transferred to Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> a Vesper Service will be held at 7:00 p.m.

**Teaching Mass Thursday 12 Dec beginning at 6:30 p.m.**

**Christmas Concert Monday 16 Dec. 7:00 p.m.**

**14 – 15 December is Bambinelli Sunday Third Sunday of Advent**

**Obviously Weekend Masses remain the same**

Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m., Sunday Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. , 11:30 a.m.



Who will celebrate  
Christmas correctly?  
Whoever finally lays down  
all power, all honor,  
all reputation, all vanity,  
all arrogance,  
all individualism  
beside the manger.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

#### THE ADVENT POLICE

