



### **SUNDAY REFLECTION**

We have a new season, a beginning, in the Church's life of worship today, but the Gospel is about the end, the Last Judgement. One reason for that choice of Gospel is that it is a good idea at the beginning of any project to look forward to the end – just as it is a good idea for someone beginning a course of study to bear in mind that there are examinations at the end. But there is this difference between the judgement the Gospel talks about and an examination: the candidate knows how much information he or she has ready for the test and the examiners want to find that out. In the case of the Last Judgement, God already knows where we stand and it is on our side that there is need to find out – while there is still opportunity, on our side, to make any necessary changes.

Advent is a time that helps us to find out about ourselves, to find out what it is that is important to us, what it is that occupies the thoughts of our hearts from hour to hour and from day to day. While Advent is about a coming event, it is focused paradoxically on the present. It challenges us to find out whether we are people who always want to be somewhere else rather than being fully present where we are. It enables us to find out what it is we really want; whether beneath and beyond the short-term objective, such as getting on in the world, or simply making ends meet, we cherish a deeper desire that can only be satisfied by God and nothing less. It is a time to remember that while the world around us bombards our senses with so many claims to attention, we have inner senses also, too many to be counted, tuned to the reality of God.

Advent can be the beginning of a great adventure, where, after overcoming many obstacles, we find God and ourselves. We will find God in an infant – eternity bounded by a candle – and that will teach us that there is in ourselves a vast potential, despite our limitations, a magnificent promise, because the Son of God, in sharing our human life, shares with us His heavenly inheritance. So, in looking forward to the end of time on this first Sunday of Advent, we are not

trying so much to lift a corner of the veil over the future as trying to make more and more progress in the kind of life we are meant to live, as St. Paul says in today's Second Reading. This time of year, there is often a wintry discontent in us that reflects the appearance merely of the natural world around us, rather than the truth that lies hidden beneath a bare earth. The liturgy of nature has, as its theme, dying and burial with a promise of new life germinating and springing up, and the theme of our liturgy here is the seed of life deep down in humankind that must grow until it is finally harvested at the Lord's return. So the Judgement will be a harvesting, a gathering-in of work completed, a conferring (to go back to the idea of examinations), with the "graduates" all dressed up and pleased as punch.

A Judgement indeed, but in the sense of revealing fully the judgement God has already made on the evil of the world in the death, but also in the Resurrection, of Christ. And the pain and disappointment will be for those who in the secret intentions of their hearts (see 1 Cor. 4:5), where the Spirit of God must rule, have refused to submit to His guidance.

In the religious language of Jesus' day, the Final Judgement was described as something hidden and unpredictable and catastrophic – 'sprung on you suddenly like a trap' as the Gospel says. It is a dramatic way of saying that the conclusion to this world's history is in God's hands, not ours. But the Gospel warns also against being unprepared. People continue in every age to devote themselves only to worldly concerns, 'hearts coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life', not realizing that money fails, power decays, reputations fade away, and in the end there is nothing but our inner selves, stripped of all pretensions, to present before God.

Advent is meant to create in us a special mood, a way of thinking about life. We are people who look forward to a happy conclusion to our story and that of the world, and we do so because we know that Christ not only will come to show Himself as Judge, and conqueror of evil, but has come and made the authentic life of the Kingdom present in the world, and comes continually in the power of His Spirit. From day to day He enables us to side with Him in the conflict between good and evil in the innermost secrecy of our lives, where for now His judgement takes the form of the healing action of the Spirit.

It is that same Spirit who confirms our hearts in holiness so that we may be blameless in the sight of God the Father when His Son, Jesus Christ, comes with all His saints.

**STEWARDSHIP:** "Be on guard," Jesus warns in today's Gospel, "lest your spirits become bloated with indulgence." Let us heed His warning and follow the advice of St. Paul, conducting ourselves in a way pleasing to God, overflowing with love for one another.

## **READINGS SECOND SUNDAY ADVENT**

**5 DEC '21**

**Bar. 5:1-9:** The prophet Baruch echoes the message of Isaiah that God will enable us to walk safely on level ground.

**Phil. 1:4-6, 8-11:** According to Paul; let your love for each other grow, and thus remain ready for the coming day of Christ. His prayer for us is that we will always recognize what is best.

**Lk. 3:1-6:** John the Baptist is the voice crying out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, so that all humanity can see the salvation of God.

## **HISTORY OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

The Advent wreath, a principal symbol of the Advent Season, is part of our long-standing Catholic tradition. However, the actual origins are uncertain. There is evidence of pre-Christian Germanic peoples using wreaths with lit candles during the cold and dark December days as a sign of hope in the future warm and extended-sunlight days of Spring. In Scandinavia during Winter, lighted candles 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.

By the Middle Ages, the Christians adapted this tradition and used Advent wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. After all, Christ is "the Light that comes into the world" to dispel the darkness of sin and to radiate the truth and love of God (Jn. 3:19-21). By 1600, both Catholics and Lutherans had more formal practices surrounding the Advent wreath. The symbolism of the Advent wreath is beautiful. The wreath is made of various evergreens, signifying continuous life. Even these evergreens have a traditional meaning which can be adapted to our faith: the Laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; pin, holly, and yew, immortality; and cedar, strength and healing. Holly also has a special Christian symbolism: the prickly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns, and one English legend tells of how the cross was made of holly. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolizes the eternity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the everlasting life found in Christ. Any pine cones, nuts, or seedpods used to decorate the wreath also symbolize life and resurrection. All together, the wreath of evergreen depicts the immortality of our soul and the new, everlasting life promised to us through Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who entered our world becoming true man and who was victorious over sin and death through His own passion, death and resurrection.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. A tradition is that each week represents one thousand years, to sum the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the Birth of the Savior. Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles in particular symbolize the prayer, penance, and preparatory sacrifices and good works undertaken at this time of the year. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest also wears rose vestments at Mass; Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing, because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when their preparation is now half over and they are close to Christmas. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectations and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

The light again signifies Christ, the Light of the world. Some modern day adaptations include a white candle placed in the middle of the wreath, which represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve. Here at St. Stephen, Martyr we replace the purple and rose candles with four white ones on Christmas Eve to be lit through out the Christmas Season

## **THE MASS Continued**

Before moving on to what follows on the Gloria I need to step back and address one portion of the Penitential Rite that I passed over a couple of weeks ago: the phrase Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy. Most of the time we state these in English. Occasionally

in another language which will elicit the “complaint that Latin is being imposed again even though Vatican II called for the use of the vernacular. Two points: one, the language is Greek Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison. Two, Vatican II did not call for the total elimination of the use of Latin in the Mass but for an integration of some vernacular language therein.

*“Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison”: These particular words express a plea for the full richness of God's mercy within our vulnerability.*

Within the Roman Rite Latin is the official language of the Mass, which is then normally translated into the vernacular. However, one phrase within the liturgy stands out from the rest because the words are not Latin, but Greek.

During the penitential rite at the beginning of Mass the priest or deacon will sometimes say, or the cantor sing, “*Kyrie eleison*” (“Lord, have mercy”): Greek words that were never converted into Latin. Why is that?

First of all, according to the [Catholic Encyclopedia](#), “It is certain that the liturgy at Rome was at one time said in Greek (to the end of the second century apparently).” In this regard the Greek words remind us of our Greek origins. Besides the Mass, the New Testament was originally written in Greek and the apostles frequently evangelized Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles. In fact, the Divine Liturgy of the Eastern Churches, which maintain the ancient forms, incorporate the phrase “Kyrie eleison, or its equivalent in Slavonic or other languages, in many places throughout the Mass. It is a common response to litanies, as we hear when we pray the Litany of the Saints at the Easter Vigil.

Some scholars, however, believe the words “Kyrie eleison” were not a remnant of the Greek, but were added centuries later into the Roman Rite. This means the inclusion of the Greek words in the Latin Mass was deliberate and significant.

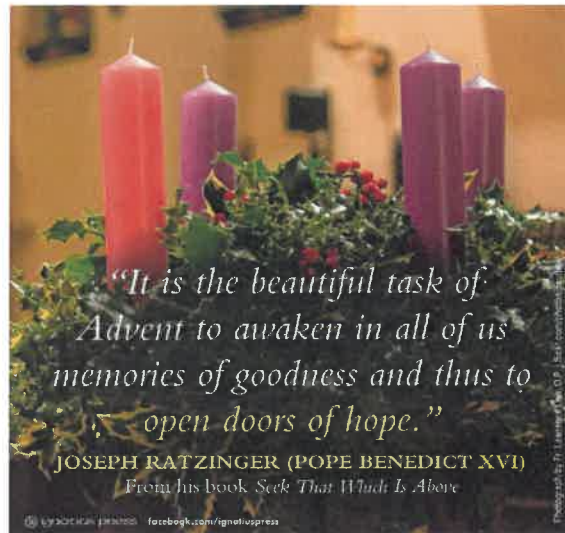
It is believed that the primary reason why the phrase “Kyrie eleison” wasn’t translated into Latin is that the words would have lost their original meaning. The book [Orthodox Worship](#) describes the true meaning of the phrase.

*“The word mercy in English is the translation of the Greek word eleos. This word has the same ultimate root as the old Greek word for oil, or more precisely, olive oil; a substance which was used extensively as a soothing agent for bruises and minor wounds. The oil was poured onto the wound and gently massaged in, thus soothing, comforting and making whole the injured part. The Hebrew word which is also translated as eleos and mercy is hesed, and means steadfast love. The Greek words for ‘Lord, have mercy,’ are ‘Kyrie, eleison’ that is to say, ‘Lord, soothe me, comfort me, take away my pain, show me your steadfast love.’ Thus mercy does not refer so much to justice or acquittal a very Western interpretation but to the infinite loving-kindness of God,*

*and his compassion for his suffering children! It is in this sense that we pray ‘Lord, have mercy,’ with great frequency throughout the Divine Liturgy.”*

In light of this explanation the phrase comes alive and highlights the beauty and depth of God’s mercy. It shows a loving God who wants to bind our wounds like the Divine Physician he is. Instead of standing in front of a tribunal at the beginning of Mass asking for mercy from a powerful judge, we are face-to-face with a compassionate God, who is ready to pick us up when we fall down.

So while it may seem strange to speak Greek words at Mass, the Church chose those words centuries ago specifically for their deep and powerful meaning.



## ADVENT DAILY REFLECTIONS

Monday 29 Dec

Is. 2:1-5 Ps. 122:1-9 Mt. 8:5-11

The nations want to go to Jerusalem to hear the word of the Lord. The centurion surrenders himself and his servant to the power of Jesus' word. Advent invites us to seek the Lord's word with new enthusiasm and to surrender to it, allowing it to bear rich fruit in our lives, especially the fruit of peace making and reconciliation.

Tuesday 30 Dec St. Andrew, Apostle

Rom 10:9-18

What Jesus said and did was witnessed by disciples, who in turn passed it on to others, both Jews and outsiders. "Apostles" are people 'sent' with this news. If the listener accepts and welcomes this message from the heart, it leads to personal salvation, when one 'calls on the name of the Lord.' Paul adds the assurance that preachers really are sent by Christ, and indeed that theirs is a blessed work, deserving of Isaiah's lyrical phrase 'how beautiful the feet of those who bring good news' (Is. 52:7). This offers us the chance to reflect on apostolic vocations even today.

Mt. 4:18-22

St. Andrew is beloved throughout the Christian world as the good-natured brother who worked with Simon Peter in the family fishing business and later introduced His brother to Jesus (Jn. 1:41) after they had both gone to hear the preaching of John the Baptist. Aside from a few mentions of him in the Gospel we have no firm data about his later ministry, but the fact that his name crops up several times in the apocryphal literature considerable respect in various local Churches. Perhaps the key to this devotion is in the Gospel statement that; like his brother, as soon as Andrew was called by Jesus he immediately left behind all his earlier concerns and spent the rest of his life following Him.

### **Wednesday 1 Dec**

**Is. 25:6-10 Ps. 23:1-6 Mt. 15:29-37**

Isaiah's vision of God as a generous host is made flesh in Jesus' compassionate response to the hungry crowd. Sometimes our response to a demanding situation can be more like the disciples' response than that of Jesus. We ask questions that are disempowering for ourselves and others.. Advent invites us to be generous in placing our seemingly very limited resources at the Lord's disposal, trusting that He can work with them in ways that are beyond our imagining.

### **Thursday 2 Dec**

**Is. 26:1-6 Ps. 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27 Mt. 7:21, 24-27**

We know what we mean when we describe someone as a rock. Such people are dependable, reliable and trustworthy. They can be counted upon in a time of need. The people of Israel discovered God to be their ultimate rock. Jesus reveals this rock-like God: He embodies the faithfulness and reliability of God. God, as revealed by Jesus, is the only rock worth building our lives on. This will entail listening to the Lord's word and living it in our lives, allowing the risen Lord to live out His own commitment to God's purposes in and through all we do and say.

### **Friday 3 Dec**

**Is. 29:17-24 Ps. 27:1, 4, 13-14 M6. 9:27-31**

Blind trust is an amazing thing. We allow a surgeon whom we have never met to cut us open; we board a jet airliner and trust that the pilots will get us safely to our destination; we ask directions from a stranger with a sense that the information given will be accurate. Sometimes our trust and confidence is misplaced: the surgeon may not be competent; the plane may crash; the directions lead us down dead-end roads. The two blind men in the Gospel had some knowledge of Jesus and His healing ministry. They cry out to this Son of David for pity and healing. They came to Him in faith and confidence, and as Jesus touched their eyes they were given a new vision. But they saw" even before the cure, for they had the vision of faith that Jesus could grant them new life.

During this Advent season we are to renew our confidence in the Lord's power to heal our blindness, our insensitivity to the needs of others, our narcissism. Our challenge is to be "caught up with Him" as the blind men were and to cry out, day after day, "Have pity on us!" Confident that the Lord will heal us we can then venture forth to do our work of evangelization – telling others of the marvelous things that God has done for us.

### **Saturday 4 Dec**

**Is. 30:19-21, 23-26 Ps. 147:1-6 Mt. 9:35-1:1, 5, 6-8**

The God of Israel dresses the wounds of His people through the ministry of Jesus. His ministry requires the energy and effort of laborers. We are those laborers, called to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand by our compassionate ministry to the lost and broken. There may be times in our lives when laboring is beyond us. At such times, we can at least pray the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest, and support such laborers by our own faithful prayer for them.

## PRAYERS

### **Blessing the Advent Wreath at Home**

(All make the sign of the cross as the leader says;)

Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who made heaven and earth

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:1-2, 5-6 or Isaiah 63:16-17, 19 or Isaiah 64:2-7

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

**Reader:** Lord our God, we praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ:

He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

He is the wisdom that teaches and guides us

He is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let Your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath.

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen

### **First Week**

All powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at His coming and call us to His side in the kingdom of heaven, where He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit God, forever and ever. Amen

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### **Second Week**

God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share His wisdom and become one with Him when He comes in glory, for He lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit God, forever and ever. Amen

### **Third Week**

Lord God, may we, Your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

### **Fourth Week**

Father, all-powerful God, Your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of Your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces His glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for His coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

## **BAMBINELLI SUNDAY THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Even though the coronavirus has played havoc with most of our plans, schedules and activities we are still attempting to maintain some continuity with past practices. So, next Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent, 12-13 Dec children of all ages are again, as in previous years, invited to bring the Baby Jesus (Bambinelli) statues from your family Nativity scenes for a blessing. Since we have to maintain adequate spacing between individuals I will not call your children forward but have them stand at their seats for the blessing.

Not familiar with Bambinelli Sunday?

The beautiful Advent Tradition, Bambinelli Sunday, was instituted by Saint Pope Paul VI during his Papacy. The tradition follows that on the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) children and adults bring their Baby Jesus figures from their homes to St Peters Square where they are blessed by the Pope. 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 placed under their Christmas trees.

### **UPCOMING**

#### **SOLEMNITY of THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

**MARY Holy Day of Obligation**

**8 DECEMBER WEDNESDAY**

**Mass Schedule 6:30 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 12 Noon 7:00 p.m.**

#### **BAMBINELLI SUNDAY**

**Third Sunday Advent 11 – 12 December**

#### **CHRISTMAS CHORAL**

**12 December Sunday 6:00 p.m.**

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### **FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT**

**27 NOVEMBER - 5 DECEMBER**

**Saturday 27 Nov 34<sup>th</sup> Weekday**

**8:30 a.m. Mass BVM Mary of Divine Hope #37**

**1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Confessions**

**5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass First Sunday Advent**

**Blessing of Advent Wreath, Proper, Creed, Preface 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent,  
Eucharistic Prayer II**

**(Intention: Brent Haladyna RIP)**

**Sunday 28 Nov First Sunday of Advent**

**7:00 a.m. Mass Blessing of Advent Wreath, Proper, Creed, Preface of 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of**



Advent, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Esther Wood RIP)

8:30 a.m. Mass Blessing of Advent Wreath, Proper, Creed, Preface of 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Louise Hite RIP)

11:30 a.m. Mass Blessing of Advent Wreath, Proper, Creed, Preface of 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)

2:00 p.m. Brig Mass

**Monday 29 Nov** Advent Weekday Day Off

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II  
(Intentions: Eric Rocco D’Andrea RIP)

**Tuesday 30 Nov** F St. Andrew Apostle

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Feast, Gloria, Preface of Apostles I, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Feast, Gloria Preface of Apostles I, Eucharistic Prayer III

**Wednesday 1 Dec** Advent Weekday

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer II

**THURSDAY 2 Dec** Advent Weekday

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Mary B. Ceccolini)

4:00 – 6:30 p.m. Confessions

6:30 p.m. Mass Proper of the Day, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III

**Friday 3 Dec** M St. Francis Xavier Priest First Friday

6:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III

7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Saint, Preface of Holy Pastors, Eucharistic Prayer III

5:00 p.m. Wedding Rehearsal

7:00 p.m. Mass & Benediction

**Saturday 4 Dec** m St. John Damascene Priest Doctor of the Church

8:30 a.m. Mass Proper of Memorial, Preface of Doctor of Church, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: In Reparation to The Immaculate Heart of Mary)

2:00 p.m. Wedding

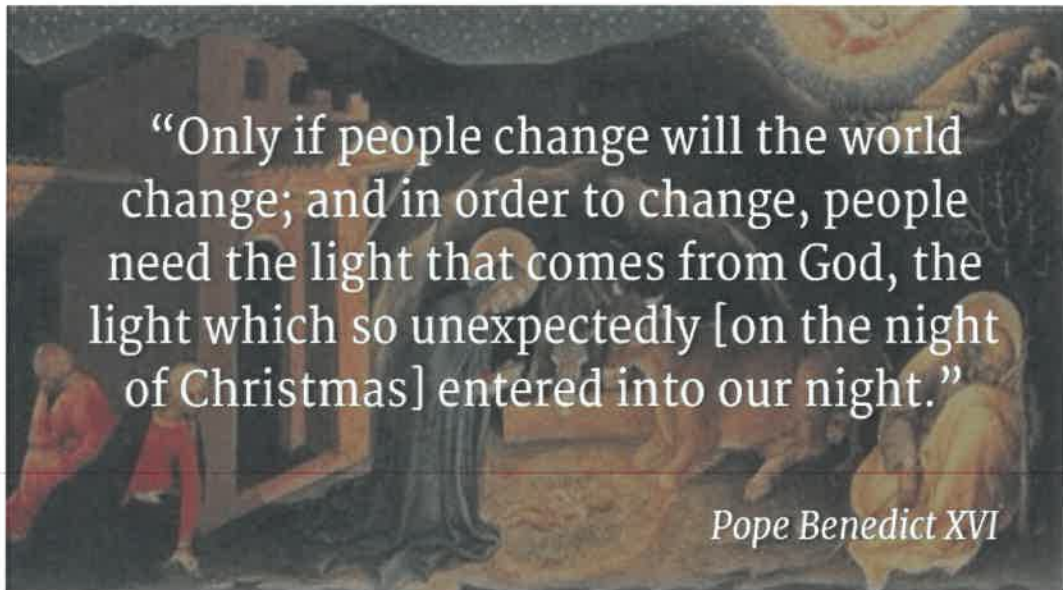
5:00 p.m. Vigil 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Susan Okamoto)

**Sunday 5 Dec** Second Sunday of Advent

7:00 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Parish of St. Stephen, Martyr)  
8:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Holy Souls in Purgatory)  
11:30 a.m. Mass Proper, Creed, Advent Preface I, Eucharistic Prayer III  
(Intention: Gregory Bopp RIP)  
2:00 p.m. Mass Brig

Friday 26 Nov 34<sup>th</sup> Weekday

8:30 a.m. Mass Unity of Christians #17B, Preface, Eucharistic Prayer II  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions



## **ADVENT LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

### **Weekend Masses**

Schedule remains the same

Saturday Vigil Mass 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.

### **Weekday Masses**

Monday – Friday 6:30 a.m. 8:30 a.m.

Thursday Evening additional Mass at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m.

### **Confessions**

(Due to some other activities taking place on regularly scheduled confession times there have been some adjustments have been made in order to provide as much time throughout the Advent Season.)

**PLEASE NOTE THE DATES AND TIMES FOR CONFESSIONS**

**BETWEEN THE 6:30 a.m. & 8:30 a.m. WEEKDAY MASSES**

**7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**

**THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**Mass 6:30 p.m.**

**FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER FIRST FRIDAY**

**6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**7:00 p.m. MASS & BENEDICTION**

**SATURDAY 4 DECEMBER NO CONFESSIONS**

**THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER**

**4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**6:30 p.m. MASS**

**FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER NO CONFESSIONS**

**SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER**

**4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**6:30 p.m. MASS**

**FRIDAY 17 DECEMBER**

**ADORATION 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**CONFESSIONS 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**SATURDAY 18 DECEMBER**

**1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**THURSDAY 23 DECEMBER**

**4:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. CONFESSIONS**

**6:30 p.m. Mass**