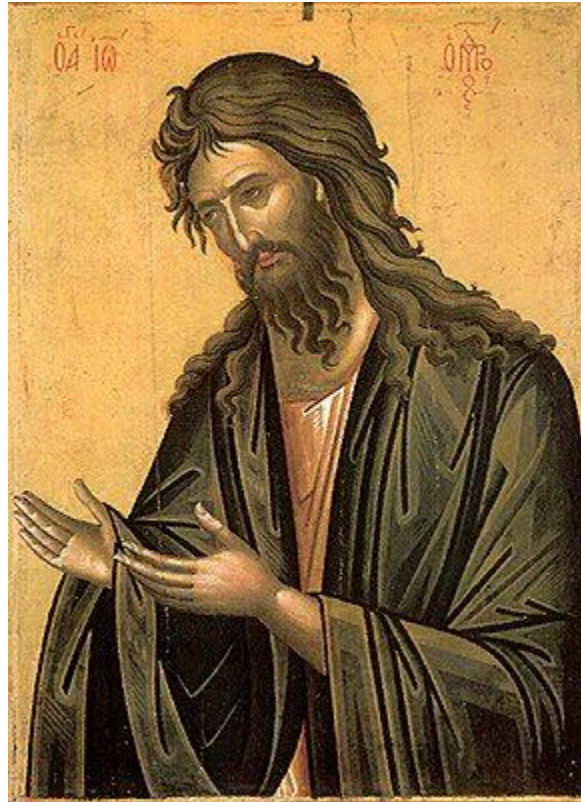


PASTOR'S MEANDERINGS
THIRD SUNDAY ADVENT (GAUDETE) (C)

15 – 16 DECEMBER 2018



SUNDAY REFLECTION

Advent is a time of hope, and a time of love. To really hope is to regard the future with a calm serenity, to await it with confidence. As Christians we are able to do this because the future is not a total unknown, for we look forward to, one day, being received by a loving God. We already have a share in God's loving presence in our midst, in the history we commemorate in a week, and in that uniquely special presence that we encounter in the Eucharist and in the Word. This sacrament empowers us to be sent forth again to share this good news with our world. *****

STEWARDSHIP: Today's Gospel provided a blueprint for good stewardship: "Let the man who has two coats give to him who has none. The man who has food should do the same."

Eusebius of Caesarea

"A Christian's virtue is the only possession that cannot be conquered or destroyed."

READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

23 DEC '18

Mi. 5:1-4: The Lord will bring His people back to their homeland. He Himself will be their source of peace.

Ps. 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19: “Lord, make us turn to You: let us see Your face and we shall be saved.”

Heb. 10:5-10: God is not interested in a blind following of rituals and laws. He prefers the sacrifice of obedient and willing hearts.

Lk. 1:39-45: Christ, the fullness of peace, is already present to Mary. she goes out to share her peace and joy with her cousin Elizabeth, and Elizabeth in her turn experiences peace.

The Talmud

“The world rests upon three things: upon truth, upon justice and upon peace. All those three are really one, for when justice is done the truth becomes an actuality, peace a reality.”

GAUDETE SUNDAY:

The third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. It marks the halfway point of Advent. Gaudete is the Latin word for rejoice.

The priest may wear a rose-colored or pink vestment instead of purple, as is worn the other three Sundays of Advent. Also, the pink candle is lit on the Advent wreath. Even the readings reflect a spirit of joy, compared to the previous two weeks.

At this point in Advent, our hearts are filled with joy as we reflect on the approaching birth of Christ. The responsorial psalm, “My soul rejoices in my God,” reflects that joy. And the first reading from Isaiah tells us: “I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul; for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels.”

We continue to feel joy this week as we look forward to the coming of Jesus. The spirit of the liturgy throughout Advent is one of expectation and preparation for Christmas and for the second coming of Christ.

In his 2014 Gaudete Sunday homily, Pope Francis said that Gaudete Sunday is known as the “Sunday of joy,” and that instead of fretting about “all they still haven’t” done to prepare for Christmas, people should “think of all the good things life has given you.”



THE GREAT “O” ANTIPHONS

The “O”

Antiphons are the final gift of the liturgy in preparing for Christmas. The O Antiphons are special jewels of the liturgy preserved from the 4th century in both the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the liturgy.

Throughout the rest of Advent the liturgy has expressed the longing for the Messiah but small bits and pieces. All through Advent the word “come” is repeated throughout the Introit and Communion antiphons. From December 17 to December 23 we have seven antiphons that intensely express the 4,000 long years of awaiting for the Messiah. The antiphons express the impatience for Christ to come. They travel through the history of redemption announcing “Jesus...as our Teacher, our Redeemer, our Liberator, our Guide, our Enlightener and our Savior” (*The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. Ryan and Ripperger, 1941). During these days, the liturgy of the Mass contrasts the greatest Messianic prophecies and types of Christ from the Old Testament with the Gospels unfolding the more immediate preparation of the birth of Christ through the Annunciation, the Visitation, the birth of John the Baptist, and the espousals of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The antiphons themselves are part of the Vespers or Evening Prayer of the Divine Office or Liturgy of the Hours. These antiphons are repeated before and after the *Magnificat*. The liturgy of the Mass hints at the O Antiphons, including excerpts at the Alleluia verse and other antiphons, but the actual O Antiphons are found only in the Divine Office. The hymn O Come, Emmanuel contains all the O Antiphons.)

The importance of the O Antiphons is twofold: Each one highlights a title for the Messiah: *O Sapientia* (O Wisdom), *O Adonai* (O Lord), *O Radix Jesse* (O Root of Jesse), *O Clavis David* (A Key of David), *O Oriens* (O Rising Sun), *O Rex Gentium* (O King of the Nations), and *O Emmanuel*. Also, each one refers to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of the Messiah. The following list of each antiphon are followed by a sample of Isaiah’s related prophecies.

December 17: O Sapientia: O Wisdom: O holy Word of God, You govern all creation with Your strong yet tender care. Come and show Your people the way to salvation. Isaiah had prophesied. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. ((Isaiah 11:2-3), and Wonderful is His counsel and great is His wisdom. (Isaiah 28:29).

December 18: O Adonai: O Lord and Ruler: O sacred Lord of ancient Israel, who showed Yourself to Moses in the burning bush, who gave him the holy law on Sinai mountain: come, stretch out Your mighty hand to set us free. Isaiah had prophesied. But He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the lands afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. (Isaiah 11:4-5); and Indeed the Lord will

be there with us, majestic; yes the Lord our judge, the Lord our lawgiver, the Lord our king, he it is who will save us. (Isaiah 33:22).

December 19: O Radix Jesse: O Root of Jesse: O Flower of Jesse's stem, you have been raised up as a sign for all peoples; kings stand silent in your presence; the nations bow down in worship before you. Come, let nothing keep you from coming to our aid. Isaiah had prophesied, But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. (Isaiah 11:1), and On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the nations, the Gentiles shall seek out, for his dwelling shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10). Remember also that Jesse was the father of King David, and Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be of the house and lineage of David and be born in David's city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:1).

December 20: O Clavis David: O Key of David: O royal Power of Israel controlling at your will the gate of Heaven. Come, break down the prison walls of death for those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death; and lead your captive people into freedom. Isaiah had prophesied, All will place the Key of the House of David on His shoulder, when he opens, no one will shut, when he shuts, no one will open. (Isaiah 22:22), and His dominion is vast and forever

December 21: O Oriens: O Radiant Dawn: O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. Isaiah had prophesied. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown. (Isaiah 9:1)

December 22: O Rex Gentium: O King of the Nations: O King of all the nations, the only joy of every human heart; O Keystone of the mighty arch of man, come and save the creature you fashioned from the dust. Isaiah had prophesied, For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:5), and He shall judge between the nations, and impose terms on many peoples. They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again. (Isaiah 2:4).

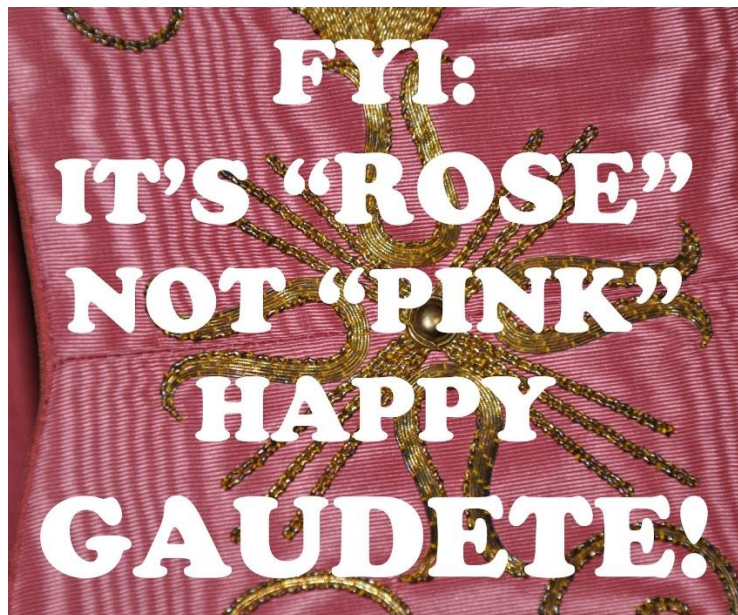
December 23: O Emmanuel: O Emmanuel: O Emmanuel, king and lawgiver, desire of the nations, Savior of all people, come and set us free, Lord our God. Isaiah had prophesied, The Lord himself will give you this sign: the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14) Remember Emmanuel means God is with us.

The essence of the O Antiphons is that they are a gift of the Liturgy and the Word of God and beg for quiet contemplation. The O Antiphon Days or "Golden Nights" fall at the latter half of Advent, the time that points to the interior preparation and meditation that we should be trying to bring to our spiritual lives.

This the secret of the O Antiphons. At first glance they are confusing, using old pictorial language that isn't readily understood. But instead of unpacking them all at once, the antiphons are gifts to slowly unpack and contemplate. We can be like Mary, pondering these

words in our hearts, perhaps looking up the Scriptural passages on which the antiphons are based. Just singing the haunting melody of *O Come Emmanuel* captures the longing and impatience for the Messiah. We can ask the Holy Spirit help us find the deeper meaning of the beautiful longing and how it applies to us as we prepare for the Light of the World to come. The other gift of the O Antiphons is that praying them together as a family gives a little taste of praying the Divine Office together. We are exposing our family to the universal prayer of the Church. We are united with our brothers and sisters in Christ on earth, but in praying these ancient antiphons unites us with the entire Mystical Body, from before Christ to the present. The closer we approach Christmas, the more the liturgy expresses urgency and intensity especially through Gaudete Sunday and the O Antiphons. We need to observe this time of final preparation for the coming of Christ with more interior contemplation and preparation and realize how we are not alone traveling this journey, but together with the whole Body of Christ throughout all time. May we pray for one another during these Golden Nights so that we may more worthily kneel at Christ's manger. O Come Lord Jesus, do not delay!

According to Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a definite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one – Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia – the Latin words *ero cras* are formed, meaning, Tomorrow, I will come. Therefore, the Lord Jesus, whose coming we have prepared for in Advent and whom we have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to us. Tomorrow, I will come. So the O Antiphons not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but bring it to a joyful conclusion.



ADVENT REFLECTIONS:

Monday 17 Dec. Gen. 49:2, 8-10 Mt. 1:1-17

When the dying Jacob blessed his twelve sons, his strongest promises were for Judah to become the House of David, which ruled Judah for its whole existence. David's ruler ship

continues traditionally in Jesus, who also came from the House of David to rule a spiritual kingdom.

Matthew's genealogy asserts Jesus' lineage, but it has a hidden point as well. Four women (before Mary) are included. Tamar was mother to Judah's sons only because she forced her legal right to bear children to a relative of her dead husband. Rahab was a Jericho prostitute when the Israelites were just moving out of the Sinai desert seeking land. She welcomed Joshua's armed spies and aided the Israelites' victory over her city. Ruth was a foreigner, but her loyalty to her Israelite mother-in-law won her a beloved place in Israel's life. She became King David's great-grandmother. The "wife of Uriah" was Bathsheba, whom David seduced and whose husband he ordered killed in battle so he could keep her. Why are these women in a genealogy intended to present Jesus in the best light?

The point is a favorite theme in Hebrew Scriptures. God does wonders in the world through the most unlikely people. The lineage of Jesus was no exception. What wonders has the Lord done through you? Think about it!

Tuesday 18 Dec. Jer. 23:5-8 Mt. 1:18-25

Wednesday 19 Dec. Jgs. 13:2-7, 24-25 Lk. 1:5-25

An angel announces that a son is to be born and dedicated to the Lord, to become a powerful leader in a time of trouble – Samson, the strong one. Samson brought wonders to his people. Some eleven hundred years later, another angelic announcement is made: a son will be born, dedicated to the Lord, a powerful prophet – John the Baptist, bringing wonders to his people. God has watched over us, sending individuals of strength and spirit to point out the Lord's presence among us. God does not neglect us. In every age of great need, God sent someone. In the "fullness of time," that is, at exactly the perfect moment, Jesus came to be God for us, God within us.

Now Christ's coming is announced once again. We are invited to look eagerly to the Lord, knowing what is coming yet not knowing all. The annual celebration is no surprise, but the coming of the Lord to a deeper place in our own being is always a surprise, an unexpected gift. Hearing the herald, we look expectantly within to see what wonder the Lord brings this time.

Thursday 20 Dec. Is. 7:10-14 Lk. 1:26-38

Put yourself in her place: maybe fifteen years old, engaged but not yet a wife, innocent and strong. She knew who she was – and there perhaps she leave us quickly behind. She knew her life was the Lord's, as calmly and simply and directly as we know who our parents are. She wanted a little help with understanding, but her willingness never wavered.

We ponder Mary's "yes" and find it astounding - so amazing that we seek special explanations for it. Underneath our awe is a question: Is it possible to be like her? Is it possible to be so centered in the Lord that whatever God wishes to do with us we accept with a simple "okay"? It is possible because our baptism opens that door for us - the door that can lead to a direct experience of God's love and a calm acceptance of God's gift of a task. Mary's task was extraordinary, to be sure, but our tasks are designed for our individuality and our place among the people just as hers was.

God wants to bring us a life of wonder, so He asks of us a simple willingness for His design to unfold in us. Let us say yes; let us say with Mary, "Let it be done to me..."

Friday 21 Dec. Sg. 2:8-14 Lk. 1:39-45

Today's reading from the Hebrew Scriptures is an image from a splendid poem. This "song of songs" has been loved through the centuries by the saints who knew God most intimately. In images of human love, it sings of the glories of the love between the human soul and the heart of God.

In the beginning of our natural winter, today's verses call us to a spiritual spring. Winter is gone from the heart because love has come. Nature rejoices because, in its familiar cycles, the Lord is present and always new, fresh. The lover sings praise to the beloved and longs to hear the sweetness of the divine voice in everything.

Spring comes forever to our hearts when we listen eagerly for the word of our beloved Lord. We are soon to celebrate that day when the Word was born in human form for us to know better, recognize more easily, follow more clearly. The Lord of our spirit leaps toward us, seeking our heart for His own. If we give it to Him, winter's coldness will disappear forever from our being. Every morning and evening experience will bear deep within it a flower and a song. We will live in the perpetual eagerness of spring.

Saturday 22 Dec. 1 Sm. 1:24-28 Lk. 1:46-56

Listen to the similarities in these two songs of rejoicing from Hannah and Mary! The usual order of things has been turned upside down. The hungry are fed, the barren one has children, the poor are rescued, the lower class is made nobility. All these astonishments come from the hand of a merciful God.

How unexpected is the action of God! How much joy it brings to the human heart! We trudge along our daily paths, seeing the expected. We sometimes even prefer the familiar since we have gotten this far with it. Let changes be small and gradual, we hope.

But Hannah and Mary were delighted that when God acts it is not more of the same – and the surprises are altogether better than the familiar.

The only thing that doesn't change in our adventure with God's love is that the unexpected constantly arrives. God's astonishments open our eyes to deeper dimensions of life. They turn us upside down so we can experience glories we have not yet known. God gives us new ways of being, so our heart is fresh and open to His activity. Hannah and Mary loved it! Don't we want to join them?

UP-COMING SCHEDULE

Saturday 15 Dec Mass 8:30 a.m.

Advent Retreat

Internment Jennifer Whight

Confessions 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Vigil Mass for 3rd Sunday of Advent (Baptisms) 5:00 p.m.

Bambinelli Sunday

Sunday 16 Dec Masses 7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. (Baptisms) 5:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Bambinelli Sunday

Monday 17 Dec Day Off
6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
11:00 a.m. Funeral Jeanette Youmans
7:00 p.m. - Brig

Tuesday 18 Dec 6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confession
8:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 p.m. Music Concert

Wednesday 19 Dec 6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions
8:30 a.m. Mas
10:00 a.m. PCRS Mass time at school
11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Appointment
5:30 p.m. Mass Indian Creek Correctional Facility

Thursday 20 Dec 6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions
8:30 a.m. Mass
5:00 p.m. Confessions
6:30 p.m. Mass

Friday 21 Dec 6:30 a.m. Mass
7:00 – 8:30 a.m. Confessions
8:30 a.m. Mass

Saturday 22 Dec 8:30 a.m. Mass
Confessions 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Vigil Mass 4th Sunday of Advent 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 23 Dec FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Masses 7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. 5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. Brig

Monday 24 Dec Christmas Eve
Children's Mass 3:00 p.m.
Masses 6:00 p.m. 9:00 p.m. 12 Midnight

Tuesday 25 Dec Dawn Mass 7:30 a.m. Mass of the Day 10:00 a.m. Brig 7:00 p.m.

Christmas week Wednesday – Saturday 26-29 Dec Mass 8:30 a.m.