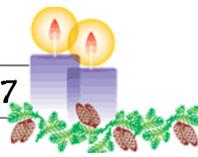


December 10, 2017



FROM THE
PASTOR

ADVENT HAS ONLY THREE FULL WEEKS THIS YEAR. Christmas Eve's being on a Sunday means that the fourth week is only a short few hours. Israel, as known as Zion, Jerusalem, is in captivity, far from their holy temple, far from feeling any "comfort" or any sense of being carried or cared-for. We hear the Prophet shouting to the alienated, what he himself has heard. Our whole 1st reading contains promises and hopeful images of just what God is going to do.

All our Advent Readings and liturgies can be interpreted as a series of divine finger-pointing and demanding for the work of straightening our roads, filling in our valleys, leveling our mountains and then the Shepherd will be pleased and will return us. Advent is our prayer-time to get closer to God; this closeness is where the Spiritual Life is lived that is *recovery*. Therefore, Advent is the season to allow ourselves time for God's recovery of ourselves.

Today's Gospel contains the opening dramatic presentation, that all the verses of this Gospel are "Good News" of Jesus the Son of God. The first scene in the playing-out of this Good News is John the Baptist's fulfilling the prophecy we hear in our 1st reading. John clarifies so early in his preaching and baptizing that he is not the Son of God but points out to Jesus as the mightier-One Who will be the Giver of a new baptism in the Spirit. This Spirit will continue the reconstruction of our creation and will aid the recovery of our selves.

May we pray for God's guidance to receive the incarnate Son with gladness that the Joy, Peace of the season will remain with us all through!

Fr. Michael

REFLEXIONES DE NUESTRO
PASTOR



ADVIENTO TIENE SOLO TRES SEMANAS ESTE AÑO. La vigilia de Navidad comienza en domingo, eso significa que la cuarta semana de Adviento solo tiene unas cuantas horas este año. Israel, también conocido como Sion, Jerusalén, está en cautiverio, lejos de su templo, lejos de sentir ninguna "comodidad" o algún sentido de ser cuidados. Escuchamos al profeta gritando a la alineación, lo que el mismo ha escuchado. Toda nuestra 1era lectura, contiene promesas e imágenes de esperanza de lo que tan solo Dios va a hacer.

Todas las liturgias y Lecturas de Adviento, pueden ser interpretadas como una serie del dedo divino apuntando y demandando las obras para enderezar nuestros caminos, llenando nuestros valles, anivelando nuestras montañas y entonces el Pastor estará contento y regresara a nosotros. Adviento es nuestro tiempo de oración para estar cerca de Dios; esta cercanía es donde la Vida Espiritual se vive, eso es recuperación. Así pues, Adviento es la temporada que nos permite el tiempo para reconciliarnos con Dios.

El Evangelio de hoy contiene la presentación dramática de apertura, que todos los versos de este Evangelio son "Buenas Noticias" de Jesús el Hijo de Dios. La primera escena en salir de estas Buenas Noticias es, Juan el Bautista cumpliendo la profecía que escuchamos en nuestra 1era lectura. Juan aclara muy temprano en su predicación y bautizando, que él, no es el Hijo de Dios; pero nos dirige hacia Jesús como el Poderoso, quien será el dador del nuevo Bautismo en el Espíritu. Este Espíritu continuara la reconstrucción de nuestra creación, y nos auxiliara en nuestra recuperación.

Oremos por la guía de Dios para recibir al Hijo encarnado con alegría para que el gozo, la Paz de esta temporada se quede con nosotros siempre!

Padre Miguel

UPCOMING RETREATS:

ASH WEDNESDAY RETREAT — Offered at *Our Lady of Peace Retreat House* (Beaverton, OR), on Wednesday, **February 14, 9:00am—2:30pm**, with Retreat Master Rev. Vincent Kelber, O.P. Includes Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and quiet reflection time. Suggested donation is \$40/person (lunch included). Info: sisters@olpretreat.org or 503-649-7127.

RETRouvaille — **FIND A NEW BEGINNING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE** by attending a Retrouvaille retreat Do you feel alone? Frustrated or angry? Arguing or just not talking to each other? There is hope! For confidential information or to register for the **January 19-21 (2018)**. 1 weekend, go to: www.helpourmarriage.org or call 1-503-225-9191.

DID YOU KNOW? That our local Vicariate (Eugene area churches) now has a website? Check it out, and find out what is going on in our Vicariate and area churches, at: <http://catcommc.wixsite.com/ccolc> (and our St. Mark website also has a link to it in the “Around the Area” tab!)

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS — Regular Court meeting on **December 14 (Thursday)** ... Mass at 12:15pm, followed by potluck/meeting at 1:00pm; bring a dish to share. For info: Julia Kelso at 541-344-6851, or www.cdacourtregion118.com.

Do you know anyone who could benefit from a Christmas Food Box? Encourage them to call SVDP, and request a box! The distribution day for St. Mark Church is **December 21st**.



FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS ...

To indicate that he was consecrated to God for a special work, Samson never cut his hair (Jgs 13:2-5; 16:17). In similar ways, other men and women in Scripture set themselves apart for God by taking vows, wearing distinctive clothing, eating a distinctive diet, or living alone in the wilderness. The ancient Nazirites, for example, took vows and promised not to cut their hair, come near a human corpse, or consume alcohol (Nm 6:1-21).

In the early centuries of the Church many men and women sought to give themselves completely to God, and practiced similar strict spiritual disciplines like fasting, prayer, and vigils, while remaining part of their local assemblies. Their consecrated lives, in some ways, resembled that of Anna, the prophetess who was present when Jesus was presented at the temple (Lk 2:36-38).

In time, however, many of these dedicated believers began moving out to the wilderness to devote their lives exclusively to prayer, penance, and works of charity. They took vows to: remain single as St. Paul advised (1 Cor 7:32-34), to live in voluntary poverty as Jesus had counseled those who wished to become “perfect” (Mt 19:21), and to obey the spiritual fathers and mothers who helped them become holy (Heb 13:17). This sacrificial way of life helped to focus and purify them.

These “ascetics”, as they were called (biblical Greek word for ‘discipline’), looked to several scriptural figures as their inspiration and models, in particular: Elijah the prophet (1 Kgs 17:1-9), John the Baptist and his disciples (Mt 3:1-4; 9:14-15), and our Lord, himself, who had spent forty days alone in the wilderness to pray, fast, and do battle with the devil (Lk 4:1-13). Over the following centuries, most of these Christians organized into religious orders, and formed like-minded communities with a common life of prayer and discipline. New groups emerged, each with its own “charism”, or special gift.

Today, a wide variety of Catholic orders serve the Church and world. Some are cloistered — dedicated exclusively to prayer, meditation, and manual labor. Others give themselves to works of charity, such as healthcare or social work. Still others specialize in evangelization, teaching, or communications media. Whatever their specific gifts, all share a vocation from God to serve as men & women set apart for a special task.

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible

1 Kgs 19:1-18 · Mt 4:1-2 · Mk 1:2-6, 12-13 · Lk 5:33-35 · Acts 21:23-24 · 1 Tm 6:17-19 · Heb 11:37-38 · Rv 14:4 ·
& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 914-933 · 944-945 · 1672 ·