

**For The Bulletin Of
December 2, 2018**



**THE FIRST SUNDAY OF
ADVENT**

From Father Robert

Most of us look for meaning in the signs and events of daily life. We wonder how God might be acting in our lives. Was this a chance meeting with an old friend, or part of something greater? Was it a coincidence that I was thinking of this person when I received a call from him or her? Did the inclement weather keep me at home so I was able to spend time with my family? Not only we, but generations of those who have gone before us, discerned meaning in the events of daily life. The ancient Romans looked at the sky for omens, and read the entrails of slaughtered chickens to discern how the gods were acting in the world.

The gospel for The First Sunday of Advent gives us signs that will accompany the end times, the coming of the Son of Man. But we would be mistaken if we took these passages literally. And it's certainly true that hundreds if not thousands of people have done just that – looked for these signs to be fulfilled literally.

The message of this passage sought to give hope to a beleaguered people, the Christians, who anticipated their

redemption. Many of them desperately wanted to see the coming of the Son of Man Who would establish justice and peace. Many of the early Christians were on the bottom of the social ladder, experiencing tribulations and trials. Jesus Himself had faced a violent end at the hands of the state. The Christians needed to be reminded that their salvation would come, and that they also needed to be vigilant, watching for that same salvation. And at the time this gospel was written there were many other Christians who may have lost hope or grown weary of waiting. This message was for them, and the message is for us as well.

For us, the watching for the coming of the Son of Man has been not merely decades, as it was for the early Christians, but two millennia! Do we really believe that the end is near? That Jesus might return any day? It might be more worthwhile for me to imagine my own personal end in death rather than the end of the world. In that way, it might be easier to see that my own personal end could catch me “by surprise like a trap.” And when I live with the expectation that my end is near, or at least unknown, it can be easier for daily anxieties to dissipate. This is not to say we have no cares for the world, but rather, we have our eyes set on something greater as we live by a different set of values. Ideally, we serve more than we are served; we give more than we receive. And in that way we imitate Jesus, Whose disciples we are.

Living The Paschal Mystery

How would I live today if I knew it was my last day on the earth? What priorities would guide my choices and decisions? The church gives us the

reading from the Gospel of St. Luke to begin this new Liturgical Year and the Advent Season in part so that we might call to mind the “end times” and the concurrent coming of the Son of Man. When our minds are drowning in lists, shopping, groceries, and gifts, we might pause, raise our head above these pressing concerns, and reflect from another point of view. In the end, what does it all mean? What is driving my actions and behaviors? Am I watchful, vigilant for the Lord’s coming? And what would such watchfulness look like? The dying and rising of Jesus gives meaning to my own personal death and resurrection each season, when I set aside my own desires and aims and focus on something eternal, something lasting. It is then that we recall the relationships forged and celebrated on this earthen endure forever. The coming of the Son of Man means death to an old way of life, and resurrection of hope and life everlasting.

Here are several questions to guide your reflection as we begin a new Liturgical Year of Grace and the Season of Advent:

- What is an action or practice of preparation you can embrace this Advent? It could be an action of preparation for Christmas, preparing for Jesus’ second coming, or preparing our world to become more like the kingdom of God.
- As Christians living in the year 2018, we realize that our own personal end will likely come before the second coming of Jesus. Thinking about your own mortality, how would you live this coming year if you knew it was your last on earth?

- Advent is a time of preparation and a time of waiting. What spiritual practices make waiting fruitful/productive for you?
- Though today’s gospel can seem disturbing, we are called to be people of hope and joy. As a Christian, how do you preach safety, peace, and hope when you encounter panic, chaos, and despair?



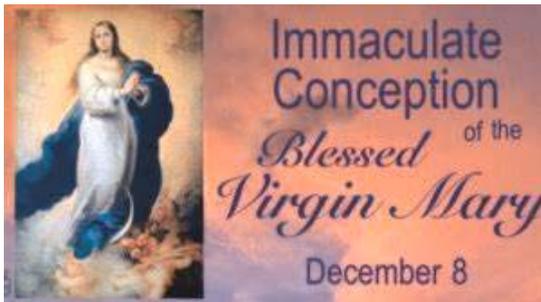
About Liturgy: Be Vigilant!

We may be able to control our own personal practices and even our parish culture, but we will never be able to control how others observe the weeks leading up to Christmas. We can ensure that we leave out the singing of the Glory to God during Advent but people will still sing and play Christmas Carols in their homes and social gatherings and they will be heard everywhere while shopping in malls. No matter how long you may refrain from putting up your own Christmas tree, so many others already have theirs up and decorated. And no amount of preaching will convince the majority of folks that they should be spending more time in quiet prayer and reflection rather than in shopping for gifts and attending Christmas parties.

As much as we want all Christians to keep prayerful reflective watch in anticipation of the coming of the Lord, we cannot become “Advent police!”

because the encouragement to vigilance goes both ways. We, too, must be vigilant that our behavior and attitudes help us “increase and abound in love for one another and for all” (I Thessalonians 3:12). One way you can do this is to learn and participate in some of the Advent practices of cultures that are different from yours. For other cultures, Advent is a time of prayer and family gatherings, of joyful music and quiet contemplation. There is a beautiful grace, too, in this kind of waiting for “The Day of the Lord.”

As those who help shape the unique spirit of Advent in our communities, let us help one another be attentive to God’s presence all around us so that our hearts may not become drowsy from any anxiety.



This coming Saturday, December 8th, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation. We will celebrate full Sung Eucharist at 9:00 a.m.



The Memorial Funeral Liturgy for Bernadette “Bernie” Cox, beloved wife of Tim Cox, the Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus, will be celebrated here in our church on Thursday, December 13th, at 10:30 a.m. with a Reception following in the parish hall. Please keep the Cox Family in your prayers as they commend Bernie to God’s loving embrace.



You are invited to join the members of our Filipino Community in the annual celebration of Simbang Gabi, a nine day celebration of Liturgies in preparation for the Christmas Feast. The community will gather each morning at 5:00 a.m. from December 16th through Christmas Eve, December 24th. Following each liturgy, a traditional breakfast will be served in the parish hall. Members of our Filipino Community have taken responsibility to provide volunteers for all the liturgical ministries: Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Musicians, Choir, Cantors as well as Sponsors for the breakfast. At the invitation of **Amante and Gloria**

Asuncion, Fr. Francis will be coming from the Philippines to preside and preach for each day's liturgy. All are welcome!



Christmas Environment

You are invited to become a part of a great tradition in our parish of providing the Christmas Environment. Each year our Art & Environment Committee prepares an appropriate and beautiful setting for the Christmas Feast. The wreaths, candles, garlands, lights, trees, panels of cloth at the Icons, the artwork, and the poinsettias all create an environment that says "Christmas!" for the entire Christmas/Epiphany Season. Preparation of the Christmas environment begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 18th and continues each day of that week until the environment is completely installed. Envelopes to make your contribution to provide for the Christmas Environment have been placed in the monthly envelope pack as well as on the credenza and may be made either In Honor Of or in Loving Memory of a loved one, family member, or friend. Thank you for your generous support that makes our Christmas Environment possible.



Christmas Liturgies

Monday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist – *Cantors and Organ, Beloved Carols, The Children Tell The Story of Christmas; Father Robert presides.*

9:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist – *The Parish Choir and Organ, Beloved Carols (No Incense), Father Robert and Father Moses*

Tuesday, December 25th, Christmas Day, The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord

9:00 and 11:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist *Procession, The Parish Choir and Cantors, Organ, (No Incense); Father Robert and Father Moses*



To all who came and helped change our Fall Environment over to the Advent Environment this past Wednesday, a huge Thank You: **Dave Rodrigues, Don Benson, Rich Confetti, Roger & Cathy Rieger, Tony & Claudia Gumina, Lorraine Lohmeier, Shelli Daviess, Teresa Glenn, Bobbie Ochang, Carole Miller, Deanna Ribeiro, Peter Degl'Innocenti, Vangie Parrilla, Nancy DiMaggio, Brenda Head, Patricia Kramer, Tom & Stevie Catchings, Judi Heckendorn, Anne Peck, Harlan Young, Jean Rodgers and Patricia Britton.**

...to those who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church and parish hall for the weekend: **Mency Osborne, Jean Rogers, Carole Miller, Alfred Madoshi, Al Cosce, and Jun Bajet.**

...to those who clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall throughout the week: **Steve Rojek, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, Harlan Young, and Father Robert.**

...to **Dilcia Aparicio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

Jeannine Ford, Melodye Costanza, Rowena Cayaban, Harlan Young, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Frank Zamora and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Carole Miller, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who kept watch over our vehicles during the Thanksgiving Liturgy, **Steve Rojek**, and the weekend Liturgies: **Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Jose Perez.**

