

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## December 14, 2008



Isaiah 61:1-2, 10--11

- These are the words of Isaiah, God's servant, Jesus applied them to himself. They apply to us, too, as Christians.
- God speaks to us here and asks us to "proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." How am I going to respond? What am I going to do to make 2009 a year when people experience the love of God and are freed from captivity, oppression, and heartbreak?
- If I think I can do nothing, listen to God's promise: the Lord will make justice spring up as surely as what is sown springs up from a garden.



### MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>

Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	<i>Advent Evening Prayer</i>
Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	Sylvia Lapointe by Jean-Paul
Friday	9:00 a.m.	Anne Williams MacNeil by CWG
Saturday	7:00 p.m.	Deceased relatives of the Kavanagh Family by Marilyn Kluge
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Greta Rutter by Bob & Family
	11:00 a.m.	Mario Mello by Dulce Lopes & Delia Mello

**WEEKEND COLLECTIONS:**      \$2,837.80      Thank you!



### We are getting close to the purpose of Advent

Advent is a difficult season. As Christians, we are encouraged not to jump the gun on Christmas. And yet, all around us we hear Christmas carols, Christmas decorations are up, we can have the nativity scene out already.

The Church is not in such a hurry. With the help of Scripture readings, especially from the Old Testament prophets, we are encouraged to reflect on the purpose for which Christ has come and, in many ways, still needs to come: the realization of God's dream with our world. The Advent Season invites us to revisit our dependence on God, to revisit our desire for God and to discover through the night of waiting what it is to hope for that faith-certainty that God does indeed come.

And what a way for God to come: as one of our own! It is hoped that what we do in these weeks of Advent makes us ready to touch base again with the awesome mystery from which we are privileged to live.

### Advent Penitential Service: Tuesday, December 16, 7:00 p.m.

It is entirely in line with Advent to come together as a parish community and take a bit of time to give expression to the fact that as a community, and as individual members of that community, we stand in need of what God offers us in Jesus Christ: forgiveness of sins. Yes, we are a sinful people. That is not a put-down. It is an acknowledgment that there are dark corners of various kinds in our community and in ourselves where the true God and his Reign are not altogether welcome, where our acceptance of Jesus Christ is only half-hearted or perhaps at times even contradicted, where we do not live the holy and godly lives that God summons us to. And only a gracious and forgiving God can handle these dark corners of ours, this "being out of joint", this "missing the mark". God does so by extending his mercy, his forgiveness to us. Surely, we want to yield to and give ourselves over to such a God. We do so with a contrite heart; then God can do his wonderful work of forgiving us, of reconciling us with himself and with others.

That is what this Tuesday's service is all about. It is a good way of preparing for Christmas to grow in holiness. That is what God wants for us. Deep down, we also want that for ourselves and for each other.



### **Individual Reconciliation /Confession**

What we celebrate in the communal service mentioned above can also be celebrated in a more personal way in "individual confession". One form does not cancel out the other. Having God's forgiveness proclaimed over us in a more personal way can complement significantly the more general and communal way of celebrating the same forgiveness. In fact, in some instances it may even be of greater benefit or there may be a greater need for it. A few specific time slots are set aside for that in the hope that everyone can be accommodated who wants to celebrate God's forgiveness in this way.

**Tuesday, December 16: after Penitential Service**

**Thursday, December 18: 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, December 20: 11:00 to Noon**

NOTE: Anyone wanting (or needing) to go to confession can *approach the priest at any time*.

### **Is there a difference between Reconciliation and Confession?**

As Catholics we know what *going to confession* means. Some have noticed that in some places they speak of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*. And we wonder: is it the same? Both terms refer to the same moment of God's grace. The advantage of speaking of *Reconciliation* is that it recognizes God as the principal actor. It is the gracious God who reconciles. Speaking of *confession* gives the impression that we are the principal actors: we confess our sins. Yes, that is part of this moment of grace, but clearly the secondary part. The "news element" in this moment of grace is not what the repentant sinner brings to it, but what a gracious, compassionate, forgiving God brings: God intensifies or, where necessary, renews his Covenant with us. That is **Good News**.

### **Last Monday's Liturgy of the Word**

What we did Last Monday to mark the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is what a *Liturgy of the Word* looks like. The focus is on **The Word of God**, using the Scripture Readings of the day. That is why we incensed the Lectionary. In addition to the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful it also included a *Proclamation of Praise*. It is a form of Catholic worship that is used in many parishes on Sunday when there is no priest. It shows that a parish community can still worship properly in such a case. But it also shows that a number of elements still have to be in place and looked after.

### **"Maranatha": What is that?**

It is the word we have been using as response to the prayers of the faithful at Mass, and it is quite appropriate for the Advent and Christmas Season. It is an Aramaic word that means "*Come, Lord Jesus.*" It is the language most likely spoken by Jesus. You find the word itself in the second last verse of the Bible: Revelation 22:20. And it captures well the longings of us as Christians: *Maranatha!* Come, Lord Jesus!



### **Poinsettias for our Church's Christmas Decorations**

The Christmas Season is a time when the deceased who have been part of our lives are on our mind and especially in our heart. We may want to give tangible expression to that in the form of bringing a poinsettia to the church for Christmas, the Feast of God's love for all, the living and the dead. In that light, the poinsettia serves as a sign of our continued affection for those who have died and an expression of faith that the dead are embraced by God's love.

Come to think of it, that gesture is also a tangible expression of what we say in the Creed: "*I believe in the communion of the saints*". Death cannot undo the bond of the communion that Christ has established among us, something that is particularly in focus around the Table of the Eucharist.



**Help with Christmas Decorations on Sunday, December 21 after 11:00 a.m. Mass**

Much of our Christmas decorations go back to one of our previous pastors, Father Don. He had a real taste for that. But, they take a bit of time to put up. If you can spare an hour or two, we would love to have some help to decorate the Church on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Part of that are the stars on our Christmas tree in church. The stars bear the names of our parishioners, a lovely idea. We have just updated those names from the list we have. We may have made a mistake, but if your name is not on it this year, it may be because you are not registered. Something that can be corrected!



**A Christmas Holiday Dinner: Saturday, December 27, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

For a number of years now *The Aylmer Ministerial Association* (which is the ecumenical association of Aylmer Ministers of the different churches) has been sponsoring **A Christmas Holiday Dinner** which is held at the **Aylmer FOOD CENTRE, 70 Eardley Road**. This week’s insert indicates how you can participate in it, help with it and contribute to it.

**The Book of Revelation: Does it inspire or scare us?**

In the homily on the First Sunday of Advent, I emphasized that the Bible does not specialize in making predictions concerning the future. Instead, its specialty is God’s promise of salvation. A parishioner remarked afterwards: “What about *the Book of Revelation*?” That is a good question. How about taking a closer look at that last book of the Bible? There is some very good literature on it that we could benefit from. In the New Year, we could have a few sessions on it. We could either do that during the day or some evenings. If you are interested, please, let us know.



**Mass Schedule for Christmas**

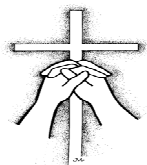
**Christmas Eve, December 24: 7:00 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.**  
**Christmas Day, December 25: 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**



With your support, Development and Peace has taken action with the oppressed and impoverished people of the world, to support them in their struggle for justice and to help educate Canadians about the problems of underdevelopment and the obstacles to peace. Through our prayers and solidarity, we support the “Urban Poor Associates in Manila Phillipines”,

the “Pastoral Land Commission in Brazil” and “South Africa’s Information Development Centre” as they work for access to water for some of the world’s poorest people. We also provide emergency aid to communities such as those in Iraq and Africa, affected by war or natural disaster. ~ Most Reverend Brendan O’Brien, Archbishop of St. Johns

Make us worthy Lord, to serve our fellow men and women throughout the world who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them through our hands this day their daily bread and by our understanding love, give peace and joy. ~ Mother Teresa’s Prayer “LIFE BEFORE PROFIT”



**PRAYERS FOR THE SICK:** Kindly remember Dave McCormick, Tony Sciampacone, Corrie Welch, Pat Norlock, Bonnie Brennan and their families in your prayers.

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