

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 29, 2009



Mark 13:33--37

- Apocalyptic visions no longer move me, Lord. But I hear your warning, that I do not let my heart be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life. The mother of dissipation is not joy, but joylessness.
- In you, Lord, I find the basis of my peace, enabling me to stand up and raise my head.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 30TH

Wednesday	9:00 a.m.	
Friday	9:00 a.m.	Mass followed by Exposition & Benediction
Saturday	7:00 p.m.	Mickie O’Heare by Helen, Carole, Gail & Penny John Irwin by Maureen & Al Des Roche
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Ed Richard by Lydia & Family
	11:00 a.m.	Lucien Ranger by the Ranger Family Michel Morin by Claire Laframboise

WEEKEND COLLECTIONS: \$ 2,286.93 Thank You!

We begin the Advent Season...



Yes, Christmas is coming. However, the Church goes about it in a different way compared to the commercial and entertainment world all around us. And it is difficult not to get caught up in it in some way. But the Church prepares for Christmas by really preparing for it instead of jumping the gun on it. This preparation takes the form of the Advent Season. Observing that season is not easy; it goes a bit against the grain. And yet, a proper observance of Advent may go a long way in helping us maintain the specifically Christian meaning of Christmas. In fact, it will also show up aspects of the Christmas Mystery that the secular observance of Christmas keeps “safely buried”.

So let us go “a little heavy” on the Advent Season and try to hold back on “Christmassy things”. If the coming of Christ (not of Santa) is the focus for us as Christians, then we need to be aware of what Jesus Christ has come for and, in many ways, still needs to come for: a world that cries out for justice, for peace, for light. The prophets of the Old Testament – whom we hear in the first readings at Mass – keep insisting on that.

We would not want the observance of Advent to be limited to what we do or see or sing in the church building. How about making an effort to observe Advent at home too? A very helpful tool for that is the use of the ***Advent Wreath*** at home. How about huddling around it and spending some time while using the daily reflections that you find in the bulletin as an insert (they are taken from ***Catholic Update***)?

The bulletin this Sunday includes yet another insert, one on the Advent Season. That one too may be helpful in getting a sense of what the Church intends with the Advent Season.

Reflection Starters at the top of the inside first page of the bulletin...

Are they of any use? We have had that feature in our bulletin for a while now. Reference is made to one of the Scripture readings of that particular Sunday. And that is followed by a few lines for reflection/prayer based on that Scripture reading. These lines are taken from ***Sacred Space. The Prayer Book 2010***, which originates from the Jesuit Communication Centre, Ireland. In case, you are interested, that Communication Centre has a fine website where you may find very helpful reflection material: www.sacredspace.ie.

The lines referred to above could be used on Sunday or on a week day to go back to one of the Sunday Scripture readings and use these lines for a moment of reflection. You may even try it as a family. It is one attempt to bring the faith stuff from the church into our homes and let it do its work in us where we really live.

The Advent Banners in the Church...

We are fortunate to have a set of Advent Banners that are very much in tune with the basic orientation of the Advent Season and with how the Church understands that season as expressed in one of its official documents: *“Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period of devout and joyful expectation.”*

In line with that, the central banner depicts ***the coming of the Son of Man*** on a cloud with glory and power, a favourite image to make us look forward with hope to Christ’s coming in glory. It is an aspect of our faith that is articulated in a line that the priest prays on our behalf at every Mass: *“as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

The banner to the left depicts ***Hagia Sophia***, Lady Wisdom, an image of God-with-us, Emmanuel. Lady Wisdom is surrounded by four Old Testament prophets who, in striking images, spell out what the promised Messiah is coming for – something we hear proclaimed in the first reading of the Advent Season: a new kind of world that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of, but that is still to be constructed in many ways.

The banner on the right depicts the concrete way in which God’s promise of salvation begins to be fulfilled with Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem.

The Two Versions of the Sunday Missal are available

The Sunday Missals for this coming year start with this Sunday’s readings and prayers. One is the version many of us are familiar with. We have lots of them. It would be great if all of our families have one in our homes (\$5). There is a more recent version that is called ***Sunday Missal for Young Catholics***. Do not let the title mislead you. The way it is put together with so much helpful explanation is a real treat (\$8).

Next Sunday, December 6: *The Guignolée*

That is part of parish life too. In this case, we work together with other parishes, more particularly through the services of St. Vincent de Paul Society, to collect donations that will benefit the less fortunate in our area. It starts after the 11:00 a.m. Mass. Our candidates for next year’s Confirmation and First Communion are expected to participate in it as well so that they may be exposed to that dimension of the Christian life too.

Tuesday, December 8: *Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary*

Mary is one of the principal Advent figures. We honour her and let ourselves be inspired by her so that she may teach us to become Advent people. There is no one like Mary who can show us what it is to be a disciple of Jesus. Pope Paul VI called her “the most prominent disciple of Jesus”. Since she is so important to us as Christians, we would not want to let this feast of Mary go by without a special service devoted to her. The format of this service is some reflections on Mary interspersed with some Marian hymns from our hymnal. The service begins at **7:00 p.m.** and will take about 35 minutes.

Tuesday, December 15. 7:00 p.m.: *Advent Penitential Service*

There are several ways of observing the Advent Season and of preparing for Christmas. Coming together as a parish community to reflect on how much we as individuals and as a parish community stand in need of what God offers us in Jesus Christ is a very healthy one. In the Bible and in several prayers of the Church we are called a sinful people. That is not meant as a put-down. Rather, it is a way of saying that without the tender mercy of our God and without the forgiveness of our sins we cannot be the kind of people God wants us to be. In this case, God’s tender mercy and God’s forgiveness are not in question. They are *“a given”*. It is so beautifully expressed in the words of Zechariah:

*“By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

What needs attention is our readiness to acknowledge our need for that mercy and forgiveness from God. None of us can do without it. To bring that in focus is the purpose of the communal **Advent Penitential Service** which is being planned for Tuesday, December 15.

For those who want to follow that up with the individual celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation some time-slots for that will be posted shortly.

Lovers of Music: an Opportunity to support a very good cause

The Diocesan "Funds for Pastoral works", in collaboration with L'Orchestre symphonique de Gatineau, is putting on a fund-raising concert to which three choirs (Children's Choir of l'École Massé, La Chanterelle de Buckingham, and St. Pierre-Chanel Choir) are voluntarily contributing their musical talents. The concert **Symphonie de Noel** will take place

Saturday, December 5, 8:00 p.m. in St. Gregory Church in Buckingham

Sunday, December 6, 3:00 p.m. in St. Francis-de-Sales Church in Gatineau.

Tickets (35\$) can be obtained at the two churches or at the Diocesan Center or by e-mail michelcareau@diocesegatineau.org.

This Diocesan Fund has been established by Bishop Roger Ébacher in order to finance important and creative pastoral initiatives in our Diocese that usually go beyond any particular parish.

MEETING: CWG POT LUCK SUPPER on December 8th at 5:45 p.m. Please bring your favourite dish along with a small wrapped gift to share. A short meeting will follow. All CWG members welcome!

CHRISTMAS CONCERT: Our Lady of the Annunciation 9th Annual Christmas Variety Concert will be held Wednesday, December 2nd at the Church Centre, 189 Archambault Street, Gatineau (Hull Sector) at 7 p.m. The concert will feature Alexander's Old Time Band, Paddy Kelly and Paddy Maher and various other local artists. There will be door prizes and a reception following the concert at no extra charge. Tickets: \$15. Tel.:819-778-2827.



THANK YOU: Sincere thanks to the parish community for your prayers during Magdalena Mueller's lengthy illness and to Fr. Bill, the choir and Agnes, for your involvement in the funeral. Also thanks to the C.W.G. and friends for cards and condolences. ~ Teenie Mueller and family

DIOCESAN FAITH FORMATION: Discernment as a way of life. Often in our spiritual journeys we seek to know God's will. There are four pre-conditions that prepare one's heart to discern wisely. Properly framing your discernment question is the next important step. Then praying daily with the question and listening. Over time, God will indicate through signs (7) that help the mature Christian confirm in faith that a spiritual direction has emerged. Discernment is a wonderful gift of the Spirit that can bring such peace and harmony into our daily lives.

When Sat., December 12, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. **Where:** St. John the Apostle parish, 2340 Baseline Road

Who: Presenter Sister Rosemary O'Toole, CSJ has been a spiritual director at The Upper Room Home of Prayer for 25 years.. Cost: \$15/please bring a lunch.

Pre-registration required: (abrown@ArchOttawa.ca); (613-738-5025, ext. 217).



SYMPATHY & PRAYERS: Our prayers and sympathies are extended to the Preslawski Family on the loss of Casimir and to the Bracken Family on the loss of Frank.

Visit our Website:www.stmarkparish.ca

Bulletin design & Website content/design by: *Catherine LeGuerrier*

Need a website or flyer? Visit www.catleg.ca or e-mail: catleg@catleg.ca