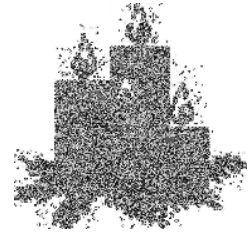


# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2009



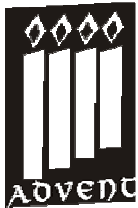
Micah 5.2- 5

- Micah spoke out passionately on behalf of the poor against their exploitation by the rich and corrupt. Alone among the prophets, he names Bethlehem as the place the Messiah will be born; he will come from among the poorest, to represent their cause.
- Let me sit and think about the poverty, the vulnerability of the Christ-child, and what it means for my life, today.

## MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Gordon McFadden by Marie Deceased relatives & friends by Frank McGuire
	9:30 p.m.	Henry Trudeau by CWG
Friday	9:00 a.m.	Margaret Daly by John & Zelda O'Neil
	11:00 a.m.	Raymond LaBonte by Roland & Madeline Gratton
Saturday	7:00 p.m.	Casmir Preslawski by Joe & Maude McCaffrey
Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Joe Archambault by Suzanne & family
	11:00 a.m.	Stephen Rander by Ranger family

**WEEKEND COLLECTIONS:**      \$ 2,299.12      Thank You!



### That Precious Time before we celebrate the Birth of Christ

It is still not the 25<sup>th</sup> of December; we are still in Advent mode. That gives us an opportunity to reflect on Gospel scenes that are very much part of the build-up towards Christmas.

This 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, in its Gospel passage, takes a closer look at two remarkable women...

#### ***Two Waiting Women***

Every encounter, when it is genuine,  
resembles something of a birth:  
the birth of love, of a friendship, of a calling.  
Then something comes about that goes beyond us,  
as if our fingertips brushed against something extraordinary.  
and so the impossible suddenly becomes possible!  
The sky is clothed with the sun and with the moon's crescent.  
The day vanishes in the gold of the horizon  
and the night opens its slopes to dreams that soar down them.  
Truly, when there is a word spoken between two people,  
between two women who are bearing life,  
Elizabeth and Mary, the mother of the prophet and the mother of the Messiah....  
then a child is being announced like a murmur.

#### ***I Can Feel Him Moving***

Who can ever find enough words  
to describe the wonder of a mother bringing life?  
Mary, Elizabeth, two women, two mothers.  
There's something sacred that dwells within them,  
Especially, when a baby's quivering opens us out the inexpressible.  
Two women who are carrying the hope of a people

The Word of God makes himself known  
and causes the coiled-up prophet to move  
in the body of a woman.  
He is waiting, all set to shout out the Word  
of the one who comes.

### ***The Virgin Gives Birth***

Mary, a woman like all others, a bit like the silhouette  
of the Palestinian women on our TV screens, close to terror.  
Yet what a story that young girl had.  
Completely in love, she gave her all!  
She gave her body and her heart.  
In the solitude of the temple with God as her only partner  
God, yes, you heard right, God himself.  
When the angel came to tell her she would be a mother,  
she didn't say: that's impossible, I've taken a vow.  
She only asked one question: "How will this happen?"  
Thus, in the silence of the "yes",  
the inexplicable began to come to birth.  
First of all in her heart, and finally in her body.  
Let's not seek too far away for what is beyond us.  
There are symbolic things that are sometimes truer than reality.  
Up to this point thousands of prophets had announced:  
"The virgin will give birth to a son."  
There's nothing more to say.  
We can only sink into contemplation of the ineffable  
and with Mary say, "Magnificat!"

*From The Road to Christmas (2009)*

### **"Individual" Confessions or Reconciliation...**

In addition to last Tuesday's communal Advent Penitential Service, we have had a number of time slots set aside to accommodate those who choose to celebrate the saving mystery of God's Forgiveness in a more personal way in individual confession. There is one more such time slot left, this **Monday, December 21 from 4:30 to 5:30p.m.** We are grateful to the Marianhill Fathers who are helping us out for this.

### **MASS SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS:**

<b>Christmas Eve - Thursday, December 24</b>	<b>7:00 and 9:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Christmas Day - Friday, December 25</b>	<b>9:00 and 11:00 a.m.</b>

### **MASS SCHEDULE FOR NEW YEAR'S:**

<b>New Year's Eve - Thursday, December 31</b>	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>
<b>New Year's Day - Friday, January 1</b>	<b>9:00 and 11:00 a.m.</b>

### **For Christmas Masses, we are especially hospitable...**

We try to be hospitable at all times. But there is a special need for that when, at Christmas, there are more people participating in our Masses than usual who may not be as familiar with our church as our regular worshippers. So let us make sure to make them feel welcome and to give them a hand when there is a need for assistance.



### **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. **You can start bringing the Poinsettias in on Monday, December 21st.** Thank you!



**Do you have some time to spare after this Sunday's 11:00 a.m. Mass?**

It takes a bit of time to put up our Christmas decorations. We can make the job easier, if we have some help.

We'll do most of it right after the 11:00 a.m. Mass this Sunday.

**Christmas Holiday Dinner: Wednesday, December 30 from 4 to 7 p.m.**

This is the tenth time that *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**) for families and individuals in the community. If you are interested in participating in it, helping with it and contributing to it - please consult the flyer, the green insert of our Sunday bulletin of two weeks ago. There are still some flyers around in the Church.

**Participation in the Advent Event of November 28, in the Guignolée of December 6 and in the Advent Penitential Service of December 15:**

**All part of the journey to Confirmation and First Communion**

When Confirmation and First Communion and preparation for them stand on their own and sort of occur on the margin of parish life, not much good can be expected from them. In today's context, more than ever before, they need a home, they need a fertile setting, they need a parish community that is serious about - and committed to - the four poles of parish life: **liturgy, faith formation, fellowship, service/outreach**. That is why an attempt is being made to have the candidates for Confirmation and First Communion be exposed to and have them participate in some parish activities like the ones mentioned above. It has a lot to do with cultivating a taste for the many aspects of living a Christian life, of following Jesus Christ. It is so much more than "getting the sacraments done".

Each of the above mentioned activities presents its own challenges. That is especially true of the last one, the Penitential Service. So much depends here on with what kind of God we go through life, who God is for us, how God supposedly deals with us; naturally, this then also colours the way we look at ourselves in the presence of God. Is God the one whose specialty it is to set us free, or is God for us the "score-settler"? The sooner we can get rid of that "score-settler" notion of God the better it is. At the other extreme, we do not want to end up with a God who is not much more than a benevolent 'Santa Claus'.

There is a fair bit of work but - above all - a healthy sense of faith and real competence required for the coordination, for the background input, for the necessary guidance to others who are part of the execution of it all. So many thanks, to those who so diligently accompany our younger parishioners on this faith journey. A parish simply cannot do without them.

**Church envelopes 2010:** are available in the Marvevee Room. They are used for the Sunday collection which is really the main source of our income. If you do not find your box, please, let us know and it will be corrected.



**An interesting thought of St. Augustine...**

"What does it avail me that this birth of Christ is always happening, if it does not happen in me? That it should happen in me is what matters."

Visit our Website: [www.stmarkparish.ca](http://www.stmarkparish.ca)