

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

Scripture Reflection

While the season of Advent is filled with remembering, recalling Christ's first coming as an infant, when divinity became incarnate, it is also a time of anticipation, as we reflect on and await Christ's second coming. But Advent is not only a celebration of the past and an eager expectation of the future; it is a season that asks us to meditate on the present and delight in Christ's presence with us now. It is this very season that concentrates our hearts, minds and souls on Christ in order to make present the days that have already been and the days that are surely coming.

The season of Advent is shaped by two distinct threads in the tapestry of Scripture readings: God's promise to bring forth a Messiah and the people's preparations for the Messiah, both as an infant and as the Lord returning at the end of time. Throughout the Advent readings we see God's promise unfolding for the people of Israel.

Jeremiah said, "The days are surely coming," when God would "cause a righteous branch to spring up for David: and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land." God's promise will be for the entire house of Israel. A sense of imminence looms over Jeremiah's prophecy, as does the mystery of its fulfillment.

The cosmic predictions of Jesus are serious and foreboding; they get our attention. Scripture scholars tell us that this is not literal language, but a figure of speech that communicates a profound spiritual message. This style of prophetic preaching awakens us to God intervening in human affairs. The coming of the Son of Man will indeed transform the world and its peoples. How shall we prepare for such an astonishing event? Jesus tells us to be vigilant--not because God intends to frighten or destroy us, but because God has great things in store for those whom God redeems.

• **As you prepare for the coming of Christ this Advent, what can you do and how can you pray to help you be vigilant to the presence of God in our midst?**

AT HOME WITH THE WORD 2015. (C) 2014 ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO, LITURGY TRAINING PUBLICATIONS, 3949 South Racine Avenue CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60609. REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION. AMERICA MAGAZINE: November 23, 2015 Issue, John W. Martens.

Renderings of New Parish Activity Center

Drawings and floor plans of the new Parish Activity Center are on view by the Cathedral Square door of the Cathedral. If you have not yet seen the plans for this project, please take time to review them.

Calendar of Prizes 2016

Calendar of Prizes 2016 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. Like last year, each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$10.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$5,000.00 Family Trip or Cash Option. Due to the state regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that all one thousand tickets be sold. Otherwise, the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. For this fund-raiser to be successful, all calendars must be sold. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:30 AM and 5:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. Thank you.

Advent Penance Service

Our communal celebration of Advent Reconciliation is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 16** at 6:30 PM. All are encouraged to attend this seasonal Liturgy. This Reconciliation Liturgy will last one hour. Additional priests will be present to help with individual confessions. This Penance Service is for the entire Parish Family. Our second grade students will celebrate their First Penance during this Advent service. There will be a reception following the service at 7:30 PM to congratulate the First Penitents. All are welcome to join us in the Cathedral Hall.

Collection of Food For The Poor

Baskets are placed at the church doors for donations of non-perishable food items and paper products for the poor. Monetary donations are also still being accepted for Catholic Charities.

Charismatic Prayer Group

The Charismatic Prayer Group will not meet again until Monday, December 14th, when they will gather in the Cathedral for Praise and Worship at 7:00 PM. All are welcome!

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16601-3315
Church Office: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOIDING OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal - Monday 7:45 AM.

Rosary - Wednesday 6:00 PM.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition - Advent and

Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday evening 6:15 PM - 8:30 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)

8:00 AM

10:00 AM

12:00 Noon

5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)

8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM

8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Saturday: 8:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Michael A. Anna

Deacon John J. Szwarc, Senior Deacon

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

ALTOONA CENTRAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.altoonacentralcatholic.com

Elementary - Pre-K thru Grade 5 - 381-7011

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 946-3475

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

MUSIC MINISTRY

Nina M. Tedeschi

Choir Director and Head Organist - 944-2044

Kevin J. Luke - E-mail: kluke@dioceseaj.org

Administrative Duties and Organist - 944-2044

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

Readings: Jer 33:14-16; 1 Thes 3:12-4:2; Lk 21:25-28,34-36

MASS INTENTIONS

November 30, Monday: Saint Andrew, Apostle

Readings: Rom 10:9-18; Mt 4:18-22

6:45 AM John Capouellez, Sr., Anniv. (Family)
8:00 AM Jim Mullan, Birthday (Nancy and Skip)
12:00 PM M. Virginia Jones (Jim & Mary Ellen Kelly)

December 1, Tuesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 11:1-10; Lk 10:21-24

6:45 AM Bill Crouse (Friends)
8:00 AM Ray McCall (Theresa Heasley)
12:00 PM Margie McConnell (Christian Mothers)

December 2, Wednesday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 25:6-10; Mt 15:29-37

6:45 AM Annie Hanlin (Terry and Jeanne Hanlin)
8:00 AM Jim Woods (Patty and Bear McCloskey)
12:00 PM Ernie Tomassetti (Mike & Sherry Byrne)

December 3, Thursday: Saint Francis Xavier, Priest

Readings: Is 26:1-6; Mt 7:21, 24-27

6:45 AM Msgr. Thomas Madden (Estate)
8:00 AM Donna Lytle Civils, Birth. (Nancy & Skip)
12:00 PM Joseph Hallinan, Birthday (Wife & Family)

December 4, Friday: Saint John Damascene, Doctor

Readings: Is 29:17-24; Mt 9:27-31

6:45 AM Bernadette Weakland (Eileen Edwards)
8:00 AM Larry & Irmina Helfrich (Estate)
12:00 PM Francis Lytle (Joe & Judi Nocito)

December 5, Saturday: Advent Weekday

Readings: Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Mt 9:35-10:1,5,6-8

8:00 AM Kitty Sullivan (J. & E. Weaver Family) - *Crypt*
12:00 PM Jim Roland (Linda Himes Family)
Vigil: Second Sunday of Advent

Readings: Bar 5:1-9; Phil 1:4-6,8-11; Lk 3:1-6

5:00 PM Rita Dittsworth (Family)

Pray For Our Sick - Remember our sisters and brothers who are weakened by illness. Prayers are sometimes the best prescribed medicine.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

A Bereavement Support Group meets on the first Wednesday of every month at Catholic Charities, next to the Cathedral, from 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Call 944-9388, ext. 205 to register for the **December 2** session.

Advent Season Begins

The Advent wreath is lighted. The Church displays her violet colors. The Scriptures proclaim anticipation and hope. There is no *Glory to God* at Mass. We prepare. The long awaited Messiah is coming into our lives, now and at the end of time. Advent is a season of joy. Rejoice in the knowledge that God comes to be with his people. We will be collecting non-perishable food items, paper products and cleaning products throughout the season of Advent. Baskets are placed at the church doors to receive donations whenever you visit the church. Be conscious of the needy this Advent

Liturgical Note

Advent begins a new liturgical year. The Sunday readings are from Cycle C (Gospel of Luke); the weekday readings are from Cycle II.

Advent/Christmas Prayer Partners

Sign-up forms will be available this weekend and nest at tables located at the church doors. You may complete the form or pick one up to take home with you to return by mail.

Advent Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Advent and Christmas we will gather at 6:30 PM to pray the Hours of the Church. Families are encouraged to make this a part of their Advent and Christmas prayer. We are the Parish Family of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, and all those with a deep love of the Eucharist are invited to be present before the Sacrament in exposition on the altar. Evening Prayer and Benediction go about forty-five minutes. Please join us tonight for Evening Prayer this First Sunday of Advent.

Advent/Christmas Mailing

All registered members of the Cathedral Parish Family should have received the annual Advent/Christmas mailing this past week. If you did not receive this important mailing, please call the Parish Office. Thank you to Mary Louise Ball, Liang Bartkowiak, Janet Belsey, Carole Chelton, Paula Clemens, Sally Leiden, Paula Miller, and Mary Gene Vogel who helped prepare the mailing

Winter Coat Drive - Our donations will be distributed to local families and agencies. Place items on the clothes rack to the far left as you enter the Cathedral through the front doors.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, November 22, 2015 - \$8,130.88

Christmas Flower Memorials - Please remember to have your Christmas Flower Memorial envelope returned to the Parish Office by **December 21**.

Cathedral Music Ministry

Adult Choir Rehearsal Schedule is as follows: Saturday, December 5; Thursday, December 10; and Saturday, December 12.

Youth Choir For Christmas Eve 5:00 PM Mass

We would like to have a group of students ready to present a half hour of carols before Mass on December 24. Call Nina Tedeschi at the Cathedral Music Ministry Office, 944-2044, if interested for rehearsal dates and times.

Advent of Christmas Concert

The Cathedral Festival Choir will present an evening of classic music for the Advent and Christmas seasons on **Sunday, December 13 at 7:00 PM**. Take a bit of time from your busy December schedule to hear the sounds of the season in the glorious acoustics of the Cathedra. There will be a *Free Will Offering*.

Lectors - Lectors who were unable to attend the Liturgical Ministers Workshop on November 7, may pick up their copy of the Workbook for Lectors 2016 in the main sacristy.

First Friday Communion Calls This Week

Our clergy visit the sick and home-bound of the parish each month. Call the Parish Office at 944-4603 to arrange a visit for yourself or a loved one.

Nocturnal Adoration - The monthly Vigil of Prayer scheduled by the Nocturnal Adoration Society for **Friday, December 4**, will be held at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Altoona from 8:00 PM until 11:00 PM. Cathedral hour is 10:00 PM - 11:00 PM. New members are always welcome.

Liturgical Reflection ...

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

This new liturgical year the weekly liturgical reflections will look closely at God's mercy. Beginning this December 8th, Pope Francis has named this to be a Holy Year of Mercy. As one of the prayers at Mass this Friday of the First Week of Advent proclaims, "...come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy." As we prepare to celebrate the anniversary of the Savior's birth and as we ready ourselves to greet the Lord when he comes again, we place ourselves completely within the divine mercy of God.

2015, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Last week at the Saturday 5:00 PM Vigil Mass, the following were accepted and welcomed into the Church. Cynthia Baum, Misty Hainsey, and Rose Settle were welcomed as Catechumens, seeking the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. Nicole Beck, Julie Criste along with Matthew Criste and Lori Stiver, already one with us in Baptism, were accepted as Candidates, seeking the Sacraments of Confirmation and/or Eucharist.

Baptism Congratulations

Makenna Rae Bobetich was baptized and welcomed into our Cathedral Parish Family at 10:00 AM Mass on Sunday, November 22. Congratulations to parents, Joel and Rachel Bobetich, along with brother, Andrew Isaac, godparents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. And at Noon Mass Brad and Meghan Kissell presented Claire Emma Kissell for Baptism. Congratulations also to godparents, Uncle Matthew and Aunt April, grandparents, family and friends. Makenna and Claire will grow in their Christian identity to the degree that family and friends model the faith.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION CONFIRMATION

All Eleventh Grade Students Confirmation Session I - Sunday, **November 29**. We will meet in the Cathedral for Evening Prayer at 6:30 PM followed by a one hour class in Cathedral Hall.

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Our third and final session of preparation is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 2**, in the Seton Suite at 6:30 PM. The students will receive Penance for the first time at our **Advent Penance Service** at 6:30 PM on **Wednesday December 16**. **BAPTISM** - Our next Session of Baptismal Prep is scheduled for **Monday, December 14** at 7:00 PM in the Seton Suite. Next date: Tuesday, February 9.