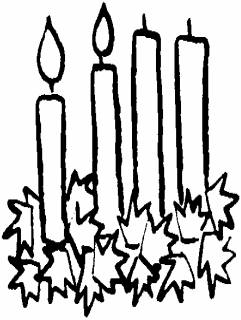


Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and St Joseph

The Second Sunday of Advent
4th December 2005

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OUR GOD WHO COMES

AS we look around the world today we can sometimes be forced to the conclusion that things are not as God intended them to be. We are living through a period when terrorism has grabbed the headlines with stories of daily bloodshed. And we are caught up in a seemingly intractable situation of war in Iraq.

The Jewish people were deported to Iraq about 2,600 years ago. They were forced out of Israel to Babylon, not very far from Baghdad. Even second and third generations longed for their homeland, for their God and for their Temple in Jerusalem.

Today we hear Isaiah trying to bring comfort to these desperate people. He tells them that God will not abandon them in exile forever. A leader will come and take them back home. He quotes God promising them that their time of slavery is over. But they must take action themselves and prepare a straight road for God to travel through as he helps them. They must have a change of heart and mind.

And the same message is repeated to us during this Advent. Isaiah tells us that, whatever our troubles and woes, God will never let us wallow permanently in a cheerless condition. God is not absent even when it is hard to see his presence. And the main thing that God wants us to receive is forgiveness, that collective pardon for our sins as a nation and our faults as individuals.

Advent proclaims the power of God. For those who accept the promises of Jesus it is not a lone uphill struggle. For those who genuinely acknowledge their shortcomings, and do their best to change, God's Spirit can make all things possible. Advent is an encouragement: our God is with us and comes each day in such a way that we can overcome whatever is thrown in our path.

So the challenge of Advent is twofold. It's a challenge for us to examine our lives, to make God's paths straight. And it's also a challenge to see the presence of God in all the situations of our life and world, both good and bad. John the Baptist was able to see this presence in Jesus, the Lamb of God. Can we see God's Advent presence? And where are we looking?

PARISH FEAST DAY AND SOCIAL

The Parish Feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception will be celebrated at 6.30pm Mass next Saturday 10th December, followed by a Social in Eleanor Hall. The Raffle Tickets for the Parish Christmas Draw, which will take place at the Social, are available this weekend.

PARISH ADVENT APPEAL

We are collecting for the Catholic Children's Society and the Cardinal Hume Centre. We need: **NEW** toys, games, books, warm clothes, baby equipment (nappies etc.), book tokens, note pads, 2006 diaries, pens, pencils, calculators and any other educational equipment. Closing date is 18th December.

Please leave your donations at the Lady Altar and thank you in advance for your generosity.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

The Senior Citizens of the Parish are warmly invited to a Christmas production at our school on Monday 12th December to start at 2pm. This will be followed by tea and mince pies.

Please telephone 01992 629503, so that we may have an idea of how many people will be coming.

ADVANCE WARNING

There will be an Advent Penance service on Monday 19th December at 8:00pm.

Help is needed to clean and prepare the church for Christmas, after the 10:00am mass on Friday 23rd December. This will last all day and there is plenty of work for all ages.

Help will also be needed at the **Parish Lunch and Party** for the elderly and housebound on Thursday 29th December.

Put the dates in your diary!

CYCLE OF PRAYER DURING ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

We are asked to pray for these intentions: Openness to the Word of God; Migrants and Refugees; Expectant Mothers.

NEW MONEY BOXES

These have been installed in the walls of the church for candles, the poor and the Catholic newspapers.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

I will hear what the Lord God has to say
a voice that speaks of peace
peace for his people.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper
and out earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight,
and all humankind shall see the salvation of God
Alleluia!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11
Psalm 84:9-14
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8

NEXT WEEKS' READINGS: Isaiah 61:1-2.10-11
Luke 1 (The Magnificat)
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8. 19-28

Mass Times

SUNDAY	SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	8.30am 10.45am 12.15pm & 6.30pm
Monday		10.00am
Tuesday	Nicholas	10.00am
Wednesday	Ambrose	10.00am
Thursday	Immaculate Conception of the B. V. Mary	10.00am
Friday	John Diego Cuahtlatoatzin	10.00am
Saturday		6.30pm
SUNDAY	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	8.30am 10.45am 12.15pm & 6.30pm

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday 10.30 - 11.00am & 5.45 - 6.15pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
There is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Church each Friday morning from 9.15 to 9.45.

**Offertory Last Week: £ 1,650.98
plus the regular Standing Orders. Thank You!**

Please note that we do not have flowers on the Altars or around the Church during Advent. It is a time of simplicity and waiting. The celebrations will come later!

BAPTISM PREPARATION

There will be a Baptism Preparation Session on Sunday 18th December at 3.00pm in the Presbytery.

FLOWERS IN THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS

The Jar at the back of the Church is available for all those who wish to make a donation towards the cost of flowers and decorating the Church for Christmas. If you prefer to donate flowers or pot plants of your own choice, it would help the flower arrangers if you brought them to the Church on the Thursday morning before Christmas.

MASS INTENTIONS

The diary for Masses in 2005 is now full. To ensure that recently given Mass intentions are said this year, they are being passed to our sick and retired Priests, as will all Mass intentions until the 2006 diary is opened towards the end of the year.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S AT YOUR WORD LORD

The Youth Group will meet on Friday evening in the Presbytery at 7:00pm. All those who are in Secondary School are welcome.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

Help is needed for washing the albs in time for Christmas. If you are interested in helping from the week commencing December 5th, please contact Chris Tulk on 01992 622431.

2006 WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOKS

These are now available from the shop, priced £3.

PADRE PIO PRAYER GROUP

The Prayer Group will meet on Friday 9th December at 8:00pm in the Church.

WEDDINGS THIS WEEK

Saturday 10th December at 12:30pm
Gareth Morgan and Sarah Galton

PAX CHRISTI ADVENT SERVICE

Will take place on Monday 5th December at 7.30 at St Aloysius Church, Phoenix Road, Euston. The service will be followed by a Christmas Market with fair trade goods, a sale of Christmas cards, mulled wine and mince pies.

THE FORTY MARTYRS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Informative books on the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales are now available from the shop – price £5.

CELEBRATION IN PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

An advent service will take place at St Luke's Church 28 Love Lane, Pinner, Middx on Sunday 11th December at 4:00pm. This will be followed by mince pies and mulled wine.

IN YOUR 20'S? IN YOUR 30'S?

If you are in your 20s, an advent retreat will be held on 18th December at More House, 53 Cromwell Rd, London; if you are in your 30s, it will be held on 17th December at Maria Assumpta Centre, Kensington Square, London. Please email hugh@project2030.fsnet.co.uk or text/ring Clare on 07950 202 205 or visit www.project2030.org.

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

This will be held on 21st December at 7:30pm at Westminster Cathedral. Contact the Cathedral for tickets or Ticketmaster on 0870 4000 700 or at www.ticketmaster.co.uk.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Once again, there will be a Parish Party to "see in" the New Year, which would enable families with younger children to celebrate together. It will take place in Eleanor Hall. There will be a Mass in the Church at 10.00pm. Afterwards, the Hall will be open, people are welcome to bring some music, something to eat, something to drink, the kettle will be on the boil! As last year, it will finish when the last of you decide to go home.