

ADVENT The Season of Joyful Anticipation

A Reflection from Fr. Joseph

A friend of mine, I'll call him Johnny, is always late for everything. He is never on time. One day, I complained to him: "Johnny, you are always late. Why is that? Don't you own a watch?" His answer was: "You have wristwatches, I have time".

Christmas is a cultural phenomenon. It is also a religious event. There is a great advantage in keeping the similarities and the differences between these two Christmases clear.

Culturally, Christmas has a tremendous impact on all of our lives, certainly an economic one. Without increased Christmas sales most retailers would not be able to survive. Yet, the influence of a cultural Christmas is not limited to money, for it also conveys to our society a set of spiritual beliefs. People who do not believe in Jesus or even in God are nevertheless influenced culturally by Christmas. At this time of year they feel the increased importance of family, an invitation to be more generous, and a general feeling of hope. Whenever we listen to a cultural Christmas song or watch a TV special, it is likely that these spiritual values will be present, inviting us to care for one another, to work for peace, to make the world a better place. However, somehow, our cultural Christmas has hijacked the true meaning of Christmas by taking Christ out of Christmas it become a cultural phenomenon or event, a good cultural event.

But here is where the difference between a cultural and a religious Christmas comes into focus. We, as believers, espouse more about Christmas than what a cultural Christmas would propose. We believe that Christmas is more than just us loving one another. It is God loving us. We believe that the most important thing about Christmas is not about what we do or should do, but about what God has done and continues to do. In other words, we believe in the Incarnation. That truth of our faith that tells us that God took up a human nature; that God became one of us; that God became Savior for the world. That primacy of what God did and continues to do in our lives is at the heart of the religious Christmas. It certainly is reflected in all the scriptures.

Today's scriptures would be a good example. Isaiah says, "God is coming to save us." The letter of James says, "The Lord is near." And in Matthew's gospel we see John the Baptist presented as "the one who is preparing the way of the Lord." The scriptures see the action of God as primary, and that action is certainly at the heart of a religious Christmas.

So you can see, by this explanation, that the relationship between the cultural Christmas and the religious Christmas is not simple. It is complex. The two are not opposed to one another because both are promoting peace, forgiveness, and love among people. And yet the religious Christmas believes more, for it believes in the centrality of God's action, which the cultural Christmas does not include.

So, I encourage you to embrace the values of a cultural Christmas. Be thankful for your Christmas cards that have Frosty the Snowman on them. They all point to the magic, the warmth and the love of this season. But, if you really want magic and warmth and love; then be thankful that you are a believer. Be thankful that you believe in God who is active in our world. If God became flesh, if God is Emmanuel, then the promises of Christmas are much more likely to happen. If God continues to act in our world and in our life, then despite all of our shortcomings, we can be confident. Then we cannot only sing about a Christmas of magic, of warmth, and of love, but with God's help we can find it and live it.



Squirettes Poinsettia Sale

This Sunday, Dec. 11th, after the 9 & 11 am Masses, in the church vestibule.

DAILY SCRIPTURE READINGS

Mon. Dec. 12th - OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, feast
Zechariah 2:10-13; Luke 1:39-47

Tue. Dec. 13th - ST. LUCY, memorial
Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Mat. 21:28-32

Wed. Dec. 14th - ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, memorial
Is. 45:6b-8, 18, 21b-25; Luke 7:19-23

Thurs. Dec. 15th - Is. 54:1-10; Luke 7:24-30

Fri. Dec. 16th - Is. 56:1-3a, 6-8; John 5:16-17, 33-36

Sat. Dec. 17th - Gen. 49:2, 8-10; Mat. 1:1-17

Sun. Dec. 18th - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Is. 7:10-14; Rom. 1:1-7; Mat. 1:18-24



ALTAR SERVERS

Wed. Dec. 14th - 7:30 PM - Volunteers

Sat. Dec. 17th - 5:00 PM - J.Nguyen, Nathan & Noah Nunez, A.Villamin.

Sun. Dec. 18th - 9:00 AM - J.Ho, S & S Lee, M.Reyes.

11:00 AM - M.Balocan, A & E Biason, S.Cho, C & F Dorado, J.Magbanua, A & K Morcilla. 5:00 PM - A.Arias, D.Brown, M.Cabuhayan, T.Johnson, D & K Sussey, V. Velasquez.

Please Note: Servers are reminded to sign-up in the sacristy for the Christmas and New Years Masses.



PARISH ENVELOPES FOR 2017

Your new set of parish envelopes are ready to be picked up from the tables at the entrance of the church. They are arranged in alphabetical order.

Anyone wishing envelopes for 2017, who are not currently using them are asked to call the parish office.

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Sun. Dec. 11 th	9 am Mass for Mary Tong, R.I.P. 11 am Mass for parishioners 5 pm Mass for Amparo Marcos, R.I.P.
Mon. Dec. 12 th	8 am Mass for Abilio Campos, R.I.P.
Tue. Dec. 13 th	8 am Mass for the int. of John Lew
Wed. Dec. 14 th	9 am Mass for the int. of Agnes Lew & Fmly. 7:30 pm Novena Mass
Thur. Dec. 15 th	8 am Mass for the int. of Jose Marie Viduya
Fri. Dec. 16 th	8 am Mass for Michael Hartree, R.I.P.
Sat. Dec. 17 th	9:00 am Mass for the int. of Osvalda Almeida 5:00 pm Mass for the int. of the Mariotti Fmly.

RCIA & ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Wednesdays, at 6:30 pm, in the church hall. For those interested in learning more about our faith, or Catholics who have not yet received the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion and anyone who would like to deepen their faith. "Drop-ins" and those interested in a specific topic are welcome. Our topic this Wednesday will be: ""



PROJECT ADVANCE

"Live gratefully, give generously"

Thank you so much to everyone who gave to our annual Project Advance appeal. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and support. **Please be reminded that the deadline to fulfill your pledges is December 31st.**

SCHOOL NEWS

- **Advent Carol Service:** will be held this Monday, Dec. 12th at 7 pm in the church. The whole school will be involved. The service consists of readings from scripture, performances by choral groups and carol singing by everyone. All are welcome to attend.
- **School Mass:** This Wed., at 9 am. Join us.
- **Colour Day:** Friday, Dec. 16th is "Red & Green Day".
- **Last Day of School & Early Dismissal:** Friday, Dec. 16th all students will be dismissed at 12 noon.



ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICE

this Friday, Dec. 16th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Jude's



Prepare for the coming of Our Lord at

Christmas. Advent is the great season of hope and preparation. During this time we are all encouraged to go to confession as a way to prepare for the coming of the Son of God with joyful hope and anticipation. This week there are many penitential services being held in our area. Check out the poster at the entrance of the church for location and times.

SIMBANG GABI 2016: Advent Novena Masses in Filipino
The Filipino Community of the Archdiocese of Vancouver is once again hosting the Novena Masses leading up to Christmas day, in accord with the Filipino tradition. Simbang Gabi will be held at St. Jude's on Monday, Dec. 19th at 7:30 pm. All are welcome to attend. See bulletin board for schedule of Masses.

ARCHDIOCESAN NEWS

Up-Coming Events

Stewardship Reflection

This 3rd Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete means to rejoice. We light the pink-coloured candle in the Advent wreath because its colour is a symbol of rejoicing or joy! A life of discipleship and

stewardship is itself infused with intense joy. We discover that a Christ-centred life, not a self-centred life, is both joyful and rewarding. Stewardship is to walk the road of joy. The joy radiates from giving, and

thus, joy shared is joy multiplied. At the heart of stewardship is an attitude of gratitude. When gratitude to God is behind our giving then joy naturally accompanies each gift we give. Stewardship is joyful and

grateful giving. It's more than giving to a need...its needing to give!

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Thinking of the Seafarers at Christmas

Please extend an act of God's love to sailors who will be spending their Christmas in Vancouver, away from their families. No need to shop, just make a cheque out to "Archdiocese of Vancouver," put "Seafarers Gifts" on the memo line and we'll do the shopping for you. Please mail your cheque to 4885 Saint John Paul II Way, c/o Finance Office. A charitable receipt will be issued for donations of \$20 or more.

Men's Discernment Night: *God has a plan for your life.*

Are you discerning God's call for your life? Vocations in Progress for men is an opportunity to meet priests, ask questions, and learn about their life and spirituality. The informal event will include prayer, dinner, and discussion. Join us on Wednesday, Dec. 14, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at St. Nicholas Parish, Langley. For more info., visit vocationsvancouver.ca/events/vip

Rise Up: Called By Name

Rise Up is a conference for young adults (aged 18-35) hosted by Catholic Christian Outreach, a Canadian university student movement. If you are a young adult then you are invited to come to Rise Up. Join us from Dec. 28/16 to Jan. 1/17 at The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver. For more info visit www.cco.ca/riseup or call CCO at 613-736-1999.

