

Third Sunday of Advent



CHRIST OUR LIGHT CATHOLIC CHURCH

ARCHDIOCESE OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B

DECEMBER 17, 2023

Facebook:



Website:



OFFICE AND MAILING ADDRESS:

510 MANLEY STREET

NAVASOTA, TX 77868-3689

LOCATION: 9677 SOUTH HIGHWAY 6

(936) 825-3920 FAX: (936) 825-7612

Email: admin@christourlight.org

PASTOR:

Rev. Giovanni Hùng Nguyễn

Permanent Deacons:

English Mass:

Garry Janota
Russell Pasket

Spanish Mass:

Rafael Millet 1st Sunday
Jose Lauro Huerta 2nd & 3rd Sunday

Mass Schedule

Sunday Mass:

Saturday Vigil: 6:00 pm

Sunday: (English) 8:00 am

Sunday: (Spanish) 1:00 pm

Weekday Mass:

First Saturday 9:00 am

Wed, Thurs, Fri 8:30 am

Tuesday 6:00 pm (English)

Thursday 6:00 pm (Spanish)

Reconciliation Confession

Tues, Thurs

2nd & 4th Saturdays

5:00 – 5:45 pm

Confession by appointment:

Parish Office

Tel: 936-825-3920

Confesiones

Los martes, jueves y el segundo
y cuarto sábado a las 5:00-5:45 pm
y por cita 936-825-3920

Rosary Prayed in Common

Tues & Thurs: 5:40 pm
Wed & Fri: 8:10 am
Saturday: 5:15 pm
Sunday: 7:15 am & 12:15 pm

P.E.R.A. (Perpetual Eucharistic Reporative Adoration)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays following the 8:30 AM Masses and will be reposed at 9:00 PM on Wednesdays, Thursdays at 5:45 PM before the 6:00 PM Spanish Mass and Friday at 9:00 PM. The "Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this sacrament of love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet him in adoration, in contemplation full of faith, and open to make amends for the serious offenses and crimes of the world. Let our adoration never cease." Please call Mary Rangel @ 936-419-9024

SUNDAY COLLECTION

2nd Advent Sunday Collection
12/10/23
Sunday Collection \$ 3,109.00
Second Collection \$ 1,077.00
Online Giving \$ 843.76

DIOCESAN SERVICES FUND 2023

2023 Parish Goal..... \$ 26,000.00
2023 Total Paid
(activity thru 12/04/23) \$ 21,602.00
Difference Goal vs. Paid \$ 4,398.00

Pope Prayer Intention for December



For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.

PARISH REGISTRATION

To our new parishioner, we welcome you to Christ Our Light Parish. Please register at the parish office or ask one of the Hospitality Ministers to help you. For parishioners moving out of the parish or changing your address or phone number, **please** notify the parish office: 936-825-3920 or by email: admin@christourlight.org

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

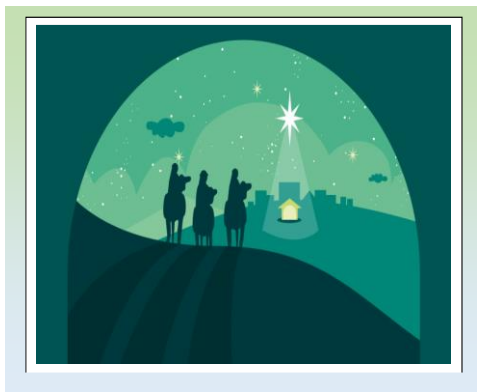
English Baptism preparation is completed via an on-line video class. Spanish Baptism Classes will be held in person. Please call for Rosa or Felisa for class dates and times. All Documents, forms and classes must be completed prior to the next upcoming scheduled Baptism date, turned in, and approved by the Pastor.

The Sacrament of Baptism is a communal celebration; therefore, private baptisms are not celebrated at Christ Our Light.

For English Baptism, contact Susan Pilger at 979-219-1360. For Spanish Baptisms, contact Rosa Torres at 936-419-8974 or Felisa Paz at 979-255-4361.

MEMORIAL CANDLES

The Candle Stands are electrical. Anyone wanting to light a candle may do so by pressing the red button and give an offering. The candle will burn for 12 hours. Memorial Candles burning for one year are \$150.00 each. Come by the parish office to schedule and pay your offering of \$150.00 for your Memorial candle.



READINGS FOR THE WEEK

DECEMBER

3rd SUNDAY
ADVENT-B

17

GATHER BOOK #1022

Is 40:1-5, 9-11/2

Pt 3:8-14

Mk 1:1-8 (5) Pss II

MONDAY

18

Jer 23:5-8

Mt 1:18-25 (194)

TUESDAY

19

Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a

Lk 1:5-25 (195)

WEDNESDAY

20

Is 7:10-14

Lk 1:26-38 (196)

THURSDAY

21

Saint Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a

Lk 1:39-45 (197)

FRIDAY

22

1 Sm 1:24-28

Lk 1:46-56 (198)

SATURDAY

23

Saint John of Kanty, Priest

Mal 3:1-4, 23-24

Lk 1:57-66 (199)

OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

USCCB CHARTER AUDIT

CMGConnect online training

The Safe Environment compliance training and renewal training is a condition of employment and for volunteer ministry in our Archdiocese. All clergy, employees, contracted school personnel, volunteers, members of groups, movements, and organizations over the age of 18, who work, volunteer or participate in any capacity are required to complete the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training and a criminal background check before they may begin employment or volunteer activities. Mandatory renewal training must be completed every five years and a new background check submitted before the five-year expiration of prior training.

For questions regarding the Child and Youth Protection Safe Environment Policy or assistance with compliance issues, contact Jeannie Nelson, Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection nelson@archgh.org Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (archgh.org)



PARISH LIFE

MASS INTENTION

12-17-23
 8 am Joe & Leona+ Pasket
 1 pm People of Parish
 12-18-23
 No Mass
 12-19-23
 6 pm Donnie Abad Jr.+
 12-20-23
 8:30 am Leila Ayachi+
 12-21-23
 8:30am Chris Gold+
 12-22-23
 8:30 am Consuelo Q Nuniz+
 12-23-23
 6 pm Helen S. Noto+
 12-24-23
 8 am Cecil Wilde+
 10 am For the People
 6 pm Vigil Mass
 Solemnity of the Nativity of The Lord
 8 pm Spanish Mass
 1:00 pm Petra Rios +

THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH

12-17-23
 10:30 – 12 noon CCE grades 6-12 SPH
 DSF Shortage Collection
 Anointing of the Sick
 12-18-23
 4:30 pm Sp. Legion of Mary
 12-19- 23
 No CCE
 Christmas break
 12-20-23
 6 pm Advent Penance Service
 St. Thomas Huntsville, Tx
 12-21-23
 12 noon Eng Legion of Mary CH
 cry room
 6:30 pm Advent Penance service
 Sacred Heart Conroe, Tx
 12-22-23
 6 am TMIY, Men's group SPH
 12-23-23
 5 – 5:30 pm Confessions
 12-24-23
 No CCE

Photo cover: Public Domain

PRAY for THE CONTINUING RECOVERY OR COMFORT OF
 the infirmed and homebound members of our community:

Retired Deacon
 Gregory Jelinek
 Sarafina Alo
 Andrew Castillo
 Braxton Castillo
 Jo Ann Clepper
 Frank Crouch
 Elizabeth Culmer
 Eva Estrada
 Liz Estrada
 Lois Finke
 Fabryna Hitchcock
 Liz Johnson
 Rachel Kammel
 Mary Ann Knowles
 Liz Kubricht
 John Lawrence
 Christian Mills
 Leslie Mills
 France Munoz

Angelina Petersen
 Wallace Petersen
 Irene Ramirez
 Lucila Rivera
 Zek Rueda
 Rosalinda Salazar
 Josh Sechelski
 Sherrie Shiflett
 Lydia Torres
 Jessie Torres
 Polly Uilkie
 Jessie Valadez, III
 Crystal Winkler
 David Woehler
 Trần Thị Tuyết Mai
 Kim Sechelski
 Dawson Shiflett
 Phyllis Failla

Call the parish office when a member of our community has a need to be remembered in prayer, 936-825-3920. Also, if you have added a name to the prayer list, please call to let us know when to remove the name from the list. Thank you.

BUSINESS OFFICE:
 Guadalupe Diaz
lupediaz@christourlight.org
 Nelda Kurten
nelda@christourlight.org
 Bulletin & Weekly Announcement
 Deadline
 10 days in advance for new layout.
 Monday before noon for rush
 announcement.
 Email: admin@christourlight.org



This is Pope Francis' prayer intention for the month of December

Pope Francis meets on April 29, 2023, with children and adults who are visually impaired and have other disabilities at a Catholic institute in Budapest, Hungary, dedicated to Blessed László Batthyány-Strattmann. | Credit: Vatican Media

Pope Francis' prayer intention for the month of December is for people with disabilities. "People with disabilities are among the most fragile among us," Pope Francis said in a video released Nov. 28. "Some of them suffer rejection, rooted in either ignorance or prejudice, which then marginalizes them," he added. The Holy Father urged civil institutions to "support their projects through access to education, employment, and places where they can express their creativity." "Programs and initiatives are needed that promote their inclusion. Above all else, big hearts are needed who want to accompany." The pope encouraged individuals to change "our mentality a little" and open "ourselves to the abilities and talents of these people who are differently abled, both in society as well as in the life of the Church." "And so, creating a completely accessible parish does not only mean eliminating physical barriers," he said. "It also assumes that we stop talking about 'them' and start talking about 'us.'" He concluded with a prayer: "Let us pray that people with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions offer inclusion programs that enhance their active participation." Pope Francis' prayer video is promoted by the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#), which raises awareness of monthly papal prayer intentions.

REJOICE ALWAYS
 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING
 IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES GIVE THANKS

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18

young.catholic.com

Rejoice always. (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

When St. Paul tells us to “rejoice always” (1 Thessalonians 5:16), it might seem that he is asking the impossible. How can we *always* feel joyful? Isn't this too much to ask, even today, on Gaudete (or “Rejoice”) Sunday?

Not according to St. Thomas Aquinas! He taught that “joy is caused by love” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 28). As we experience God's love for us, we grow in love for him—and this exchange of love is what produces joy in us. St. Paul also knew that God's love was the secret to joy, which is why he follows up his exhortation to “rejoice always” with specific steps that we can take to experience his love more deeply:

First, *pray without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). When we open our heart to God throughout the day, he fills it with his very self. The experience of his unconditional love and unending mercy ignites our love in return.

Second, *in all circumstances give thanks* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Gratitude also deepens our love for God, especially when we reflect on who he is and what he has done for us. And in this Advent season, whatever our circumstances, we can thank God for sending his Son to earth to become one of us.

Finally, *do not quench the Spirit* (1 Thessalonians 5:19). In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that “the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (5:5). If we want more joy in our lives, we can ask the Spirit to stir up the love of God in our hearts. And when he does, we can express it by praising him—which will, in turn, increase our joy.

Joy is not just for Gaudete Sunday; it's for every day. So each day, follow Paul's advice: turn to the Lord in prayer, thank him for all he has done for you, and ask him to fill you with more of his Spirit. Then praise him—and let your spirit soar!

“Lord, shower me with your love today so that my heart swells with joy!”

Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

(Psalm) Luke 1:46-50, 53-54

John 1:6-8, 19-28 - The Word Among Us

MEDITACIÓN: 1 TESALONICENSES 5, 16-24

Vivan siempre alegres. (1 Tesalonicenses 5, 16)

Cuando San Pablo nos dice “vivan siempre alegres” (1 Tesalonicenses 5, 16), pareciera que está pidiendo lo imposible, incluso hoy, en el domingo de Gaudete (alegría).

Santo Tomás de Aquino enseñó que la “alegría es causada por el amor” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, 28). Cuando experimentamos el amor de Dios por nosotros, crecemos en amor por él, y este intercambio es lo que produce alegría en nosotros. San Pablo también sabía que el amor de Dios era el secreto para la alegría, y es la razón por la que a su exhortación de “vivan siempre alegres” le siguen acciones específicas que podemos realizar para experimentar su amor más profundamente: Primero, *oren sin cesar* (1 Tesalonicenses 5, 17). Cuando abrimos nuestro corazón a Dios durante el día, él lo llena con su propio ser. La experiencia de su amor incondicional y su infinita misericordia provoca que le correspondamos su amor.

Segundo, *den gracias en toda ocasión* (1 Tesalonicenses 5, 18). La gratitud también profundiza nuestro amor por Dios, especialmente cuando reflexionamos en quién es él y lo que ha hecho por nosotros. Y en este tiempo de Adviento, podemos dar gracias a Dios por enviar a su Hijo a la tierra para hacerse uno de nosotros.

Finalmente, *no impidan la acción del Espíritu Santo* (1 Tesalonicenses 5, 19). En su carta a los Romanos, San Pablo nos dice que “Dios ha llenado con su amor nuestro corazón por medio del Espíritu Santo que nos ha dado” (5, 5). Si queremos más alegría en nuestra vida, podemos pedirle al Espíritu que despierte el amor de Dios en nuestro corazón. La alegría no está reservada solamente para el domingo de Gaudete, es para todos los días. Por eso, sigue el consejo de San Pablo: Vuélvanse al Señor en oración, denle gracias por lo que ha hecho por ustedes y pídanle que los llene más con su Espíritu.

“Señor, ¡te pido que derrames tu amor sobre mí para que mi corazón rebose de alegría!”

Isaías 61, 1-2. 10-11

(Salmo) Lucas 1, 46-48. 49-50. 53-54

Juan 1, 6-8. 19-28

2023 ADVENT PENANCE SERVICES – NORTHERN DEANERY

	PARISH	PENANCE SERVICE	DINNER	TIME	BILINGUAL
1	St. Matthias – Magnolia	Nov. 29, Wednesday	5:30pm	6:30pm	X
2	Christ Our Light – Navasota	Dec. 05, Tuesday 1 st Week of Advent	5:30pm	6:30pm	X
3	St. Stanislaus – Anderson	Service at Christ Our Light - Navasota			
4	St. Joseph – New Waverly	Dec. 14, Thursday 2 nd Week of Advent	5:30pm	6:30pm	X
5	St. Thomas – Huntsville	Dec. 20, Wednesday 3 rd Week of Advent	5:00pm	6:00pm	X
6	Sacred Heart – Conroe	Dec. 21, Thursday 3 rd Week of Advent	5:30pm	6:30pm	X
7	St. Joseph – Stoneham	Handled with individual			
8	St. Mary's – Planterville	Handled with individual			
9	St. Stephen Martyr-Point Blank				



The Season of
Advent



Hope
Peace Faith
Joy



IMPORTANCE DATES:

The Immaculate Conception Of The Blessed Virgin Mary – December 08.

Our Lady Of Guadalupe – Dec. 12.
The Nativity of the Lord – Dec. 25.

The Holy Mother of God– Jan. 1, 2024
New Year 2024.

There are not Masses/Confessions, nor Liturgy of the Word at Christ Our Light & St. Stanislaus Kostka on the evenings we have Deanery Penance services.

Morning Mass will be held as usual at 8:30 AM in Christ Our Light and at 12:00 PM in St. Stanislaus Kostka.

No hay Misas/Confesiones, ni Liturgia de la Palabra en Christ Our Light y St. Stanislaus Kostka en las tardes en las que tenemos servicios de Penitencia del Decanato.

La misa de la mañana se llevará a cabo como de costumbre a las 8:30 a. m. en Christ Our Light ya las 12:00 p. m. en St. Stanislaus Kostka.



4 Weeks of Advent reveal 4 comings of Christ; can you guess all four?

The season of preparation has changed over time; the current practice dates back to the 9th century.

You know Advent has four weeks, right? Well, sort of. It always has four Sundays, and the last week—usually only partial—varies in length. It depends on when Advent begins anywhere from November 27 to December 3.

A little history

One of the oldest records of Advent is found in St. Gregory of Tours' History of the Franks. Gregory reports that St. Perpetuus, around the year 480, decreed a preparation for Christmas extending from the feast of St. Martin (November 11) until Christmas. This period of 43 days came to be called "St. Martin's Lent," in imitation of the Lenten preparation for Easter.

Later, a local church council in Tours, France, in 567, instituted an Advent of 24 days, from December 1 to December 24. It wasn't until the 9th century that Pope St. Nicholas I apparently established the timeframe that we still use for Advent: four Sundays, with the first being the Sunday closest to St. Andrew's Day (November 30); and a length of 22 to 28 days.

The comings of Christ

There's a deep mystical meaning to the structure of Advent. The word "advent" is originally a Latin word meaning "coming." The purpose of Advent, then, is to prepare for the coming of Christ.

The French liturgical expert, Dom Gueranger, points out that "the new birth of our Redeemer takes place after four weeks, as the first nativity happened after four thousand years," according to the chronology in the Old Testament.

We are invited in Advent to unite spiritually with the Old Testament believers who awaited the coming of the Messiah over the course of roughly 4,000 years.

Jacobus de Voragine, in The Golden Legend, records another medieval interpretation: "Advent is celebrated for four weeks, to signify that this coming of the Lord is fourfold."

He says that Jesus comes ...

1. "in the flesh," when He was born of Mary in Bethlehem
2. "into our hearts," when we become members of His Church by Baptism, and are united with Him by grace
3. "in death," when each of us is called individually to appear before Him
4. "at the Last Judgment," when He will return again in glory, "to judge the living and the dead"

Preparing for the four comings

The Church, in the Gospel readings she assigns for each of the four Sundays of Advent, is preparing us for each of these four comings.

— The First Sunday of Advent focuses on the coming of Christ *at the Last Judgment*. In this year's Gospel (Luke 21:25-28, 34-36), we are reminded of the signs that will precede this coming, and warned that "that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth."

— The Gospel for the Second Sunday (Luke 3:1-6), shows us John the Baptist "proclaiming a baptism of repentance." The Church is here preparing us for the coming of Christ *in death*.

— The Gospel of the Third Sunday (Luke 3:10-18) continues that of the Second Sunday. Here John gives counsel when people ask him, "What should we do?" John the Baptist is brought forth to prepare us, too, for the coming of Christ *into our hearts*.

— In the final Sunday of Advent, the Gospel reading is the story of the Visitation (Luke 1:39-45). The coming of Christ *in history* is near; and the Church shows us Mary as the model of one who "believed that what was spoken by the Lord would be fulfilled." Mary was the first Bethlehem, for it was into her womb that Christ first came.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux teaches that these comings are mystically linked together. The Son of God united Himself to our human nature *in history*, so that He might unite us to Himself by coming *into our hearts*, and in this way prepare us to stand before Him *in death* and in the *Last Judgment*, so that we might share His glory in heaven forever. [Paul E. Cator](#) - Aletea 12/07/18



PRAYER FOR

Christmas Consolation

Come, Lord Jesus,

Come into the hearts of all in need of hope and consolation.

Expand our celebration of this sacred feast

so as to include them in our thoughts, prayers, and outreach.

Come into the lives of those bereft and overcome by despair.

Make manifest in us your incarnate love

so that we become messengers of hope and promise.

Come into the wastelands of a world immersed in violence and self-interest.

Bring us the light of your compassion, generosity, and peace

so that we, through your blessed Spirit, become instruments of transformation.

Come, Lord Jesus, Come.

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Upcoming events

Jan. 26-27, 2024

Aging conference, Friday and Saturday: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Prince of Peace - St. Andrew Community Center (19222 Tomball Pkwy., Houston). Office of Aging hosts "Nurturing The Roots of Our Communal Tree: A Catholic Conference to Honor and Support Aging," a two-day event with presentations and vendors that support pastoral and practical care for families with older adults. Friday's sessions are geared for parish leaders; Saturday is for older adults and family members. View agenda and register at archgh.org/aging.

Feb. 23-25, 2024

Weekend Retreat, 5 p.m. Friday to 11 a.m. Sunday, Mother of Perpetual Help Retreat Center (3417 W. Little York, Houston). Marian Servants of the Incarnate Wisdom present "Healing Through the Power of Jesus Christ" with speaker Father Greg Bramlage, founder of the Missionaries of the New Evangelization. Cost: \$250 per person. info@MarianServantsHouston.org.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS!

Receive Jesus in the Sacraments.



Read the Scripture readings before going to Mass.



Imitate Mary in preparing your heart for Christ.



Clothe your soul with the virtues of love and humility.



Pray and contemplate the mystery of Christmas in front of a nativity display



ChurchPOP

Merry Christmas

Christmas & New Year Schedule

SUNDAY, DEC. 24
8:00 AM

10:00 AM SPANISH

CHRISTMAS EVE
6:00 PM VIGIL
8:00 PM SPANISH

CHRISTMAS DAY:
MONDAY, DEC. 25

8:00 AM

SUNDAY, DEC. 31

8:00 AM * 1:00 PM

SOLEMNITY OF MARY

MONDAY, JAN. 1

8:00 AM

10:00 AM SPANISH



Have You Heard?

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF A NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL!

The Church needs healing, and the world needs Jesus. The Holy Spirit is inviting us to return to the source and summit of our faith—the Eucharist.



eucharisticrevival.org

Advent 2023

CALENDAR

Daily At-Home Advent Activities for Families

◆ DECEMBER ◆

SUN 17

Gaudete Sunday

Light the pink Advent candle. This candle is a symbol of joy because we are at the midpoint of Advent. Today also begins the o Antiphons. O Wisdom of our God Most High! Pray to God about areas of your life where you need the gift of wisdom to grow.

MON 18

O Leader of the House of Israel! Pray for help to follow Jesus' leadership. Demonstrate good leadership to younger classmates and siblings.

TUE 19

O Root of Jesse's Stem! Jesse and King David were Jesus' ancestors. Send Christmas cards to family and friends.

WED 20

O Key of David! Jesus opens doors that seem difficult to open. Pray about ways to overcome things that may be difficult for you.

THUR 21

O Radiant Dawn! Jesus is our light! Shut off the house lights and all electronics after dinner and enjoy the light of the Christmas tree together as a family.

FRI 22

O King of All Nations! Jesus is the king who unites us all. Read about how other countries and cultures celebrate the traditions of Christmas. Consider adopting one of these traditions in your family.

SAT 23

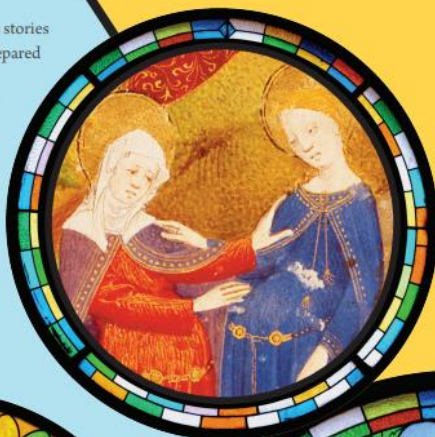
O Emmanuel! We believe that Jesus is with us always. Call or visit someone who could use your company today.



Directions: During Advent we listen to stories from the Bible about the way people prepared for the coming of Jesus. Use the clues to unscramble the names of the people in each picture. Draw a picture that shows something you know about the coming of Jesus.

BZAEHLITE

My cousin, Mary, came to visit me. We shared our joy over God's great work in our lives.



PSOJHE

I loved and took care of Mary and Jesus, and kept them safe.



GNELA BLEGIAR

I brought Mary the good news that she would be the mother of Jesus.



HJNO ETH SITBPAT

I told people to prepare for Jesus' coming by turning their hearts to God.

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PRAYER CELEBRATION

Preparation: Arrange a table with a purple cloth. Place on it an Advent wreath and a Bible. Gather the children into a large circle. Choose four people to proclaim the readings. Teach the refrain of the song, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." As the song refrain is being sung, light one of the candles on the Advent wreath.

- Leader:** *Let us pray:
Come to us, Lord, and bring us peace.
We will rejoice in your presence and serve you with all our hearts.
(Communion Rite, first week in Advent)*
- All:** *Amen.*
- Leader:** *During Advent we listen to voices that tell us to prepare, to be joyful, and to be ready to follow God's plan. Let us listen now to God's holy Word.*
- Reader 1:** *Listen to the voice of the angel, Gabriel.
"...The angel said to [Mary]... 'The holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.' (Luke 1:35)*
- All sing:** *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.*
- Reader 2:** *Listen to the voice of Elizabeth, cousin of Mary
"...Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit cried out in a loud voice and said,
'Most blessed are you among women...' (Luke 1:41-42)*
- All sing:** *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.*
- Reader 3:** *Listen to the voice of an angel to Joseph, husband of Mary and protector of Jesus
"...the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you.'" (Matthew 2:13)*
- All sing:** *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*
- Reader 4:** *Listen to the voice of John, Baptizer and prophet
'John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying,
'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:1-2)*
- All sing:** *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*
- Leader:** *The voices of Advent remind us to watch and wait.
Let us listen to them as we watch and wait for Jesus during this holy season.*
- All:** *Amen.*
- If desired, conclude with a favorite hymn.

Sadlier Religion

Prayer adapted from Gather In My Name
"Advent - A Time of Watching and Waiting"
Published by William H. Sadlier, Inc.

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CATECHIST'S PAGE

VOICES OF ADVENT

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." (Mark 1:3). Mark begins his Gospel by echoing this message of the prophet Isaiah in an account of John the Baptist preparing people for the Son of God. The voices of Isaiah and John the Baptist are among several that we hear in the Scriptures of Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas. As the Church proclaims the Scriptures about Jesus' humble birth, we also hear from Mary, Joseph, Mary's cousin Elizabeth, and the angel Gabriel. We prepare for our own celebration of Christmas by remembering their words—and all the events surrounding the first coming of Jesus Christ.

But their voices don't belong to a long-ago story. The meaning of the Advent season is two-fold, reminding us both to remember the past and to look to the future. Although we prepare for Christmas by remembering the stories of Jesus' birth, Advent is also a time to direct our hearts and minds to the joyful expectation of Christ's Second Coming at the end of time (Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars, 39).

As we ready ourselves for the great Christmas festival, we reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation: The invisible God became visible through the coming of Jesus. Advent calls us to an awareness of God's life and love today—and a preparedness for Christ's coming again at the end of time. In the company of Mary, the expectant virgin, we pray with one voice, "Maranatha! Our Lord, come!"

Suggested Activities

- Introduce your students to the "O Antiphons," a tradition of praying during the seven days prior to Christmas Eve. Read the "O Antiphons" at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers/the-o-antiphons-of-advent.cfm>. Have your class make an Advent calendar by joining two sheets of heavy poster board, one with cut-out fold-up windows for each day. Invite the students to decorate the calendar and design it so that the windows reveal an "O Antiphon" on the appropriate days.
- Emphasize Advent as a time to look ahead to Christ's coming again. Make a class wish-list for the world's future and post it in your classroom. Offer prayers for peace throughout the world during the four weeks of Advent.
- On or around December 6, tell the story of Saint Nicholas. Use it to discuss the great generosity he showed to those in need. Invite the children to name a way they can be generous during the season of Advent. Distribute candy canes as a reminder of the love Saint Nicholas showed for children.

Bright Ideas

To learn about celebrating the season of Advent, visit WeBelieveWeb.com.

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Matthew 25:35-40