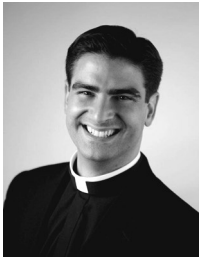


DECEMBER 2 & 3, 2023



Dear Friends in Christ,

In the Gospel today, Jesus tells his disciples to be alert, to be ready, and to watch. In short, he tells them to be full of hope. How ready are we? How full of hope?

Jesus compares himself to a master of the house who has gone traveling abroad, leaving others behind in charge of his household. We can assume a few things about their responsibilities. They should guard the property, keep it up, and care for the land. But this is not all. Jesus today focuses on the stance that these servants ought to take up, their posture, so to speak. He says they ought to be ready to welcome the master home at a moment's notice. They should be alert and watchful. They should not only be good stewards – maintaining and caring for the household – they should be oriented toward the master at all times, eagerly hoping for his return.

Advent is a season of hope, and this parable makes clear that our hope cannot be passive. Hope is an activity for the Christian, not simply a passive state of being.

Hope is one of the theological virtues, and like the other virtues it requires action. To be virtuous first requires building up a sort of habit of doing the good – a state of being which is inclined to do the good. The courageous person is ready to face his or her fear and fight for the good. In this way, virtues such as hope are a sort of passive state of being. But virtues are also activities. They must be actualized – made real – by some specific action. The courageous person must not only be ready to face his or her fear, but must actually feel some specific fear and actually pursue the good in spite of it.

Hope is a desire, a longing, for some future and difficult-to-obtain happiness. Ultimately, it is a longing for nothing less than the return of Christ and our eternal union with him. This is the posture, the attitude, that Jesus describes in the servants of the traveling master. It is not enough for them to be good stewards of the house who passively wait for his coming. They should be on the watch – actively looking for him.

Christians during this Advent season must be fully alive and fully engaged. We must be active in our pursuit of the Lord, looking around every corner and eager for his return. We must be people of hope!

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Fr. Marco

EVENTS CALENDAR

December 4 — December 10

Mon:	11 am 12 pm	Visitation for Mary Oliver Funeral Mass for Mary Oliver
Tues:	9 am	First Tuesday Coffee
Thurs:	10 am 5:30 pm	IHM Craft Group Immaculate Conception Vigil Mass
Fri:	All Day 9 am 11:35 (on Base) 7 pm	Parish Office Closed Immaculate Conception Mass Immaculate Conception Mass Immaculate Conception Mass
Sun:	8:30 to 11:30 am 2:30 pm to 6 pm	Breakfast with Santa Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration

IHM YOUTH CHRISTMAS CHOIR Want to sing with the angels at the 5 pm Christmas Eve Mass and the play starting at 4:30 pm beforehand? All the children of the parish are welcome to join the choir for the Pageant and the Mass. There will be rehearsals on Sunday, December 3 and Sunday, December 17 at 3 pm. Dress rehearsal is on Friday, December 22 at 5:30 pm. Contact Mary at 240-434-8876 or mary@ihmrcc.org. You can also sign up on the list by the Music Room Office in the hallway. Parents, please leave good contact information.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT We are seeking volunteers to assist with and actors to participate in with this year's Children's Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve. If interested, call the Children's Faith Formation office at 301-863-8793 or Kayla Krause at 412-477-9115. Following are the dates for the pageant:

December 3 at 3:00 pm, Role and Costume assignments
December 17 at 3:00 pm, Rehearsal
December 22 at 5:30 pm, Dress rehearsal
December 24 at 4:30 pm, Christmas pageant

PERPETUAL ADORATION Did you know our very own Immaculate Heart of Mary offers you the opportunity to participate in Perpetual Adoration? Some may ask "What is Perpetual Adoration?" Perpetual Adoration is a Eucharistic devotion whereby members unite in the adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament with the goal of adoring The Blessed Sacrament perpetually (24 hours a day). If you are interested, please call our adoration coordinator, Jeff Harmon, at 240-538-5017 or email adoration@ihmrcc.org for more information.

PRAYER CHAIN The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Shrine has a prayer line where you can talk and pray with someone over the phone. The prayer line is open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 5 pm. Call 1-866-202-4934.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MASS Intentions

December 4 — December 10

Monday	Is 2:1-5/Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9/ Mt 8:5-11
9:00 am	Scarlet Angus (L)
Tuesday	Is 11:1-10/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/Lk 10:21-24
5:30 pm	Gilbert Malit (D)
Wednesday	Is 25:6-10a/Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6/ Mt 15:29-37
9:00 am	Carrie Thomas (D)
Thursday	Is 26:1-6/Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a/ Mt 7:21, 24-27
5:30 pm	Dcn. Perry F. Iannaconic (D)
Friday	Gn 3:9-15, 20/PS 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4/Eph 1:3-6, 11-12/Lk 1:26-38
9:00 am	Virgin Torres (L)
7:00 pm	All IHM Parishioners
Saturday	Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/ Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8
9:00 am	Mary Bohannon (D)
4:00 pm	Carol Anne Bush (D)
Sunday	Is 40:1-5, 9-11/PS 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14/2 PT 3:8-14/MK 1:1-8
8:30 am	John Slade (S)
11:15 am	All IHM Parishioners
1:00 pm	Maria Olga Ruiz (D)

LAZARUS COMMITTEE Are you looking for a way to support grieving families in our parish? Consider joining the Lazarus Committee, a group of volunteers who prepare and serve meals after the funerals of active and registered parishioners. This is a meaningful ministry that offers comfort and fellowship to those who have lost a loved one. To learn more or to sign up, please call Pat at 240-925-0021 or Linda at 240-298-5264. Thank you for your generosity and compassion.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA The Knights of Columbus have their Breakfast with Santa on Sunday, December 10th from 9 am to 12 noon. Santa arrives at 10:30 am. Come enjoy some pancakes and a photo with Santa!

FORMED

To sign up for Formed, the premier site to access Catholic Media online, go to www.formed.org and press "sign up" and then enter the ZIP code of the parish "20653", follow the directions to create an account, and then enjoy!

HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION MASS TIMES The Mass times for the **Feast of the Immaculate Conception** are as follows: Thursday, December 7 at 5:30 pm at IHM, Friday, December 8 at 9 am at IHM, 11:35 at St. Nicholas Chapel on Base, and at 7 pm at IHM.

HOW CAN WE PRAPARE? Advent is a time of preparing for the Lord's coming - not only as our Child Savior at Christmas, but also as the Ruler King either at the end of our lives or at the end of the world, whichever comes first. How can we prepare by living in a radically selfless way as Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus right now? Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all. 'Watch!'" (Mk 13:33a, 36-37)

MASS INTENTIONS may be requested at the parish office during regular office hours (M—F, 8 am—4 pm) in person or by phone (301-863-8144 x11), or by e-mailing julian@ihmrcc.org. Your desired date may not be available. We now have the ability to accept Mass intention stipends online (but only **after** the date has been accepted by the office).



**PLEASE PRAY
THAT THE SICK
MAY BE RESTORED TO FULL HEALTH**

Audrey Somers, Kathleen Floyd, Jane Kenyon, Linda F. Gieser, Ralph Gough Sr., Betty LePore, Joseph, Rylee Corliss, Alan Stapanon, Ruby Garcia, Mia Garcia, Matthew Riddell, Marie C. Williams, Kaylee Klier, Wanda Slater, Enedina Melendez, Hector Perez, Josephine, Glenn Thompson III, John Worrell, Jim Makin, Carmen Colby, Gary Green, Grace Miedzinski, Bruce Riddell, Katelyn Corliss, Robert Weaver, Devlin Rich, Ana Gates, Dennis Berg, Alejandra Spargo, Lisa and Paul Crowe, Adele Bavani, Violette Ghalbouny, Helen Pearson, John Flynn, Michael Briscoe, Patricia A. Louis, Susan Marie Hollis, Norma Jean Jubeck, Melva Coates, Frances Roof, Jayne C., Dcn. Barnes

Please note: names will remain on this list for two months, unless otherwise notified. To keep a name on the list, please resubmit by contacting bulletin@ihmrcc.org, or call the Parish Office.

PAPAL PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER

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

Follow us on



FIRE (from *Sacred Signs*, by Fr. Romano Guardini, 1927)

Some cold, dull day in late autumn, when darkness is coming on, and the wide plain below as far as eye can reach is empty of life, and the mountain-path chill underfoot, and we are feeling very much alone, a strong natural desire comes over us for human contact. Then, suddenly, at a turn of the road, a light beams out. It comes like the answer to a summons, like a thing expectation called for, like a missing link in a series suddenly supplied.

Or, you are sitting at dusk in a dreary room between blank walls among uncongenial furniture. A familiar step approaches, a practiced hand sets the hearth to rights, the kindling crackles, a flame shoots up and the room glows with comfortable warmth. The change is as pleasant as when a cold inexpressive face suddenly lights up with friendliness.

Fire is closely allied to life. It is the aptest symbol we have for the soul within that makes us live. Like fire, life is warm and radiant, never still, eager for what is out of reach. When we watch the leaping tongues of flame, as they follow every current of the draught, soaring up not to be diverted, radiating waves of light and heat, we feel how exact the parallel is, how deep the kinship. This fire that forces its way through the intractable material that impedes it and reaches out to touch with light the things around and make for them a center of illumination,—what an image it is of that mysterious flame in us that has been set alight to penetrate the whole of nature and provide it with a hearth!

And if this aspiring, irresistible, life of ours were allowed to express itself outwardly, if it were given the least outlet, it also would break through and burst into flame.

And with what strength it should burn before the altar where at all times it rightfully belongs! We should stand there close to the Sacramental Presence where God addresses himself to us and we address ourselves to God, concentrating our force and our intelligence in prayer and attention. We recognize in the lamp before the altar the image and representation of what our life should be. Its flame is never allowed to go out.

As material light it has of course nothing to say to God. It is for you to make it an expression of your soul, like it burning out the force of your life in flame and light close to the Holy Presence.

We cannot learn this all at once. It must be striven for. But each moment of quiet illumination will bring you nearer to God, and will carry you back among men at peace. You leave the sanctuary lamp before the tabernacle in your stead, saying to God, "Lord, it stands for my soul, which is at all times in thy presence."



MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER Christ gave us a great gift of Himself on Christmas. He calls us to give of ourselves to everyone, especially our spouse. Attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Weekend and learn how to be the best gift you can be for your spouse. Sign up today to attend one of the upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends on Mar 1-3, 2024 in College Park, MD and Oct 11-13, 2024 in College Park, MD. Early sign up is recommended. For more information visit our website at: <https://moments4marriage.org> or contact us at applications@moments4marriage.org or 301-500-0871.

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED On Friday, December 8.



FIRST TUESDAY COFFEE The next First Tuesday Coffee will be held on Tuesday, December 5 from 9 until 11 am in the Parish Hall. Please bring a friend and a non-perishable food item for the Food Pantry.

GRIEVING WITH GREAT HOPE A 5-week, small group workshop to help people grieving the loss of a loved one. The Workshop will be Sundays from 3 pm until 5 pm from January 7th to February 4th, 2024 at St. Aloysius in Leonardtown. For more information, please contact Jennifer Bicknell at 301-475-8064, ext. 11 or jbicknell@saintalloysiuschurch.org. You can sign up online at <https://www.saintalloysiuschurch.org>.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS DECORATING HELP Seeking assistance from family and friends! Join us on Monday, December 18 at 10 am to bring decorations down from the loft, and on Saturday, December 23 at 10 am to decorate the church. Your help makes the process quick and enjoyable. To participate, please reach out to Pat DeCarlo at 240-925-0021 or Linda Hidalgo at 240-298-5264. We look forward to your support!



YOUR VOICES ARE NEEDED If you can read music and like to sing, please consider joining one of our groups that serve the Masses at IHM. The Adult Choir is in need of all voice parts – High School singers welcome! Youth Singers can serve at the 11:15 Mass on the 1st Sunday of the Month. There is also a Men's Choir and a Women's Choir that serve once a month. There are other groups as well! Contact Mary at 240-434-8876.

BULLETIN DEADLINE Please email your submission to bulletin@ihmrcc.org by Wednesday at 10 am prior to the Sunday of publication. All entries are subject to editing.

December 3, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

First Sunday of Advent

Is 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7 | 1 Cor 1:3-9 | Mk 13:33-37

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

In a nineteenth-century sermon, St. John Henry Newman wrote of today's Gospel: "[Jesus] mercifully whispers into our ears ... not to share in the general unbelief [around us], not to be carried away by the world but to 'beware, keep alert' and look out for his coming." I love the thought that Jesus is "mercifully whispering" to us. Welcome to Advent! We know that Advent is a time of anticipation and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ, but today's readings also speak to me of training ourselves to be alert for God's presence in the small, everyday moments of our lives. In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes that "[we] are not lacking in any spiritual gift" as we await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are gifted with his grace. Our loving God bestows countless graces on us each day, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can seek ways to be more aware of these graces. Yes, we can be more "alert" to them, but can also be thankful for these small moments of God's presence with us.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

Advent is a season of joyful hope. "I hope I can get my Christmas shopping done in time ... I hope I have time to get my house decorated this weekend." We all have "hopes and dreams" for this time of year, and, God-willing we will be blessed with a truly festive and joyous holiday season with our families. For Catholics, though, this season of "joyful hope" is one that has a much deeper meaning. We long for the return of Christ and our eternal union with him with a hope that is built on the promises of Jesus in the Scriptures. Our hope is not passive, but active. We know that God is always there for us, comforting us in bad times and rejoicing with us in times of happiness. Let us give thanks for our Triune God who desires to be in relationship with us enough that he sent his Son to take on our humanity. And let us silence any noise in our hearts so as to hear Jesus' merciful whisper of encouragement to be on the watch for his coming.

SING

*People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.*



“PEOPLE,
LOOK
EAST.
THE TIME
IS NEAR.”