
FROM THE CHAPLAINCY

Dear Woodrose parents



A few days ago, the new liturgical year began with the first Sunday of Advent. The four weeks of Advent prepare us for the two comings of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The first coming happened 2000 years ago when he was born in Bethlehem during the time of the great census ordered by Caesar Augustus. Christmas celebrates that first event.

The word *Advent* comes from the Latin verb *ad-venire* which means to come.

The liturgical color of Advent is violet because of the penitential character of the season as a spiritual preparation for Christmas.

The second coming will take place at the end of time, when Jesus will come amidst the clouds of heaven, to judge the living and the dead in the Final Judgement.

In the next four weeks, we have a wonderful opportunity to prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us prepare well for Christmas by going to confession so that Jesus will truly be born within us.

Let us also find time for quiet prayer. In an excellent article, Constance T. Hull wrote: *“In order to prepare for the great Solemnity of Christmas, we must silence our hearts and minds.*

We must ask God to help us overcome our tendency for immediate gratification. Advent is a penitential season for this reason. Yes, we want

Where is our life right now? Does it dwell with God or in the external realities of this busy season within our culture?

-CONSTANCE T. HULL

to celebrate and to a certain extent that cannot be avoided, but we should be actively living Advent. Pick a few events to attend and save the rest for the actual Christmas season. We need to spend time examining where our hope truly lies. If we are too focused on gifts and the externals of Christmas, then we need God to guide us back to a focus on Him. We must remember that Christ is our greatest gift.” (Constance T. Hull, *Advent: Our Hope is Not in This World*)



December 8 will be the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By Immaculate Conception, the Church teaches us that Mary was conceived without the stain of original sin.

It is a singular privilege given to Mary in view of her vocation as the Mother of the Redeemer.

December 8 is a holiday of obligation in the Philippines, just like December 25 and January 1.

From the same article of Constance T. Hull, here are some points for our examination of conscience during this Advent season to better prepare us to live the true spirit of Christmas:

1. Does our celebration of Christmas point to the humble beginnings of Our Savior or is it more closely related to the materialistic frenzy of the culture?
2. Is Christ firmly at the center of our Christmas celebration?
3. Advent is the time when we prepare for Christmas in a physical and a spiritual manner. God will lead us out into the deep, if we let Him. Are our preparations centered on Christ or are they focused largely on external elements?
4. Have we made a concerted effort, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to focus on waiting for Christ during Advent?
5. Is it the Living God we seek or merely pleasures and a type of happiness, which is a shadow of joy?

Let me end with the last paragraph of the article we have been quoting:

“It is time for Catholics to live their counter-cultural mission through the life of the Church, so that all the world may be brought to Christ through the witness of our lives and by the power of the Holy Spirit. One way we do this is by living Advent and cutting back on the material aspects of our Christmas preparations. There is a lot more time for prayer and the Sacraments when we are not overwhelmed in a shopping line at countless stores. May Our Lord guide you and me to Himself through this period of waiting in joyful hope. A very blessed Advent to you all.”



*Merry Christmas
and a Happy New
Year to all!*