**ADVENT REFLECTIONS**

**1st Sunday of Advent: LET THE MUSIC BEGINS…**

**With joy in our hearts, we begin this new liturgical year bringing our hopes and longings for better days to come. In this time of Advent we prepare ourselves to welcome and to celebrate the birth of the child Jesus in our midst. Our respective homes will soon be decorated with Christmas ornaments to signal the most celebrated occasion of our faith. Most importantly, we are to prepare our hearts and minds to relive the birth of the Son of God, who became flesh and lived among us, keeping in mind that His grace is sufficient to help us renew ourselves as men and women of faith. We are called to be vigilant as we wait patiently for his arrival. In the gospel, Jesus told his followers that they must be prepared for no one knows when the Day of the Lord will come. And when it happens, many will be caught by surprise just like the people during the time of the great flood. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, encouraged his listeners to conduct themselves accordingly so that they may be found worthy of God’s gift of eternal life. As the shroud of cold wind comes, may our hearts feel the warmth of God’s embrace as we look forward to celebrate the beginning of the story of our salvation.**

**Words of Wisdom**

**“Christmas has lost its meaning for us because we have lost the spirit of expectancy. We cannot prepare for an observance. We must prepare for an experience.”**

**-- Handel Brown**

**2nd Sunday of Advent Year B: MEDIOCRITY IS A BIG NO TO GOD!**

**Prepare the way of the Lord. These were the words of the prophet Isaiah that was repeated by John the Baptist in the Gospel today, the 2nd Sunday of Advent. John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, the forerunner of Jesus, was the voice of the one crying in the wilderness that had been foretold by Isaiah. Although he was the last of the great prophets, he acknowledged that he was not worthy to untie the sandals of Jesus. He humbled himself telling his followers that he was not the Messiah, as many thought, and recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah who was to come.**

**But, we might say: what should we do to prepare the way of the Lord? This simple question brings us to a profound answer. Being good is not enough, we are called to bring out the best in us in many ways; not only to hope for peace, but making peace a reality in our midst; not only to serve, but to serve others with humility and compassion; to forgive unconditionally; to pray not only for oneself but also for others wellbeing; and thus understand the full meaning of love, that is, a love that is not exclusive, but inclusive of all. So, too, like the prophets and disciples of Jesus, we can shout loudly to all regardless of color, culture, traditions and boundaries that God will fulfill his promise of bringing us back to his kingdom. From Abraham to Moses, David to Joseph, through Mary and even today, God continues to be present in every situation of our lives.**

**3rdSunday of Advent Year B: LET HIS LIGHT SHINE UPON US!**

**Today’s gospel reading falls into two sections. The first section comprises a prologue of John’s gospel and the second revolves around the question that has already been answered in the prologue. The prologue presents John the baptizer as “a man sent from God”. He is not the light; he is rather a “witness” to “the light”. The true light, Jesus, was “coming into the world”.**

**He was asked who he was and answered simply and honestly about his identity. He is not the Messiah, the Anointed of God. He is not the prophet Elijah. He told them his identity with reference to the words of the prophet Isaiah: he is the voice crying out in the wilderness, calling everyone to repentance and to prepare the way of the Lord.**

**John knows who he is; he understands the scope of his mission. His role is essential in the history of God’s saving action. He plays an important role in the gospel of John. And he humbly recognizes the One who is mightier than him. John saw from a distance what the Messiah would come to accomplish - our redemption from slavery to sin and our adoption as sons and daughters of God. In the midst of troubles and difficulties we see around us, could we still see God’s presence moving around and within us? He is coming soon!**

**4th Sunday of Advent Year B: NOW IS THE TIME TO REJOICE!**

**The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah; and the birth of the Messiah was the revelation of God’s plan of salvation for his people. The promise of salvation begins with the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, who finds favor with God, because the child in her womb is conceived by the gracious action of the Holy Spirit. Although she did not understand immediately the great mystery that was about to happen, she accepted the invitation with faith and trust. She was filled with wonder and grace because she trusted and was willing to do God's will. In this, she is a true hearer of the Word, and she kept in her heart the good news revealed to her by the angel Gabriel. Like Mary, who was filled with grace, God is giving us also the grace that we need, and he expects us to respond with the same willingness, obedience, and heartfelt trust as Mary did. God protected Mary and the child to secure that his plan will be fulfilled. When God commands he also gives the help, strength, and the means to respond. But we can either yield to his grace or resist, and go our own way. God wants what is best for us; what do we want for ourselves?**

**MASS SCHEDULES FOR Christmas Eve AND Christmas Day**

**December 24 Thursday**

**6pm and 8pm**

**December 25 Friday**

**10:30am**

**New Year’s Eve**

**December 31 Thursday**

**8pm**

**New Year’s Day**

**10:30am**

**HORARIOS DE MISAS PARA Nochebuena Y Navidad**

**24 de diciembre jueves**

**6PM y 8PM**

**Viernes 25 de diciembre**

**10:30AM**

**Vispera de Año Nuevo**

**31 de diciembre jueves**

**8pm**

**Día de Año Nuevo**

**10:30am**