Practicing joyful expectation

On being childlike in the Advent season

I very clearly remember one particular night when I was a kid. I could NOT sleep. The reason? We were going to Disneyland the next day! For a kid, this is the epitome of joyous, anticipatory expectation of a great thing.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent is, to me, the liturgical equivalent of the night before a Disney trip, where all you can think of is the awesomeness that is to come.

The readings these past few weeks have been calling us to open our eyes to the things happening around us that are signs that the Messiah is near (cf. Mt 11:2-11, Is 7:10-14). The news has been lamenting the state of our communities and world. We’re waiting in expectation because we can see how badly we need a Savior, and we’re joyful because we can see what awesomeness Jesus brings: peace, grace, healing, life, love, and a ransom from our sins.

I’ve asked myself this Advent what would make me as excited about the “advent,” or coming, of Jesus as I was for Disneyland as a kid. I invite you to do the same. Sure, it sounds trite or oversimplified—but I think this exercise lends us a chance to dive into the deeper truths of the Incarnation.

After all, Jesus did say, “Truly, I tell you… unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

~Megan Arteaga
A Holy Day for a “calendar-shattering” event

It is fitting that on New Year’s Day, we celebrate the calendar-shattering event in human history: the extraordinary role that a young woman in Galilee played in God’s plan for the human race.

In the Western Church, the young woman is titled “Mother of God.” This signifies a relationship: a loving, nurturing relationship. We know that it encompassed both a mother’s tenderness in raising a young man, and also the horror of seeing her son tortured and put to death on the Cross.

Yes, she was a mother—and Mother of God.

PASTORAL CARE

A reluctantly-taken responsibility is rewarding

*Photo above of Isabel Golez, author, leading the Rosary and Communion Service*

It has been a decade since the privilege of coordinating Catholic services for Orinda Senior Village through Santa Maria was offered to me.

I was reluctant to accept the responsibility because I had just arrived in Orinda. However, it was hard to refuse.

Because of the support coming from Santa Maria, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, and numerous other dedicated parishioners, we feel very much indeed that we are a part of the parish. We are

Keep your eyes open for the Summary Report!

We’re working with OSV (the organization helping us run “His Heart, Our Hands”) on creating a Summary Report to update you on the progress we’ve made.

Thank you so much to all those of you who submitted your Commitment Cards, prayed for His Heart, Our Hands, increased your contribution, signed up for Faith Direct, or decided to start giving to our parish.

With your help, we’re able to plan for a new year of programming to continue to share the joy of our faith and to support our local community!

For more information on Faith Direct, our eGiving program, please contact Megan in the Parish Office at 925-254-2426.

It’s not too late to help us decorate the church for our Christmas Masses!

You are invited to help us decorate our church for the season of Christmas by making a donation for our Christmas Poinsettias. In the narthex you will find envelopes for your offering. Please place them in the Sunday collection or bring them by the Parish Office.

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so blessed and ever so thankful.

Editor’s Note: Isabel helps coordinate Bible Study, Masses, the Good Friday Stations of the Cross, and more for the residents of Orinda Senior Village. We are so grateful for her involvement and coordination skills!

OUTREACH

Spirit of Giving helped another 14 families

CYO and Youth Ministry’s annual Spirit of Giving program with Contra Costa Interfaith Housing was another success!

14 families who participate in CCIH’s housing programs, many of whom are single-parent families or are transitioning out of homelessness, were gifted with wrapped and tagged Christmas presents, holiday cards, and grocery gift cards for their Christmas feast.

Pictured below is our 7th grade Girls American team, who sponsored two families. Other participants included YM families and even the Parent Bible Study group!

Please keep all the recipient families in your prayers this Advent and Christmas season!

For more information on our annual Christmas service project, contact megan@smparish.org.

Christmas Food Boxes by the Knights of Columbus

This is the weekend that Christmas Food boxes are due! Bring a box or bag of groceries to help replenish St. Peter Martyr’s food pantry before 11:30am this Sunday!

Weekly Food Collection

1st/2nd Weekends: St. Cornelius School
3rd/4th Weekends: St. Peter Martyr Church Pantry

Please put all donations in the bins in the Narthex.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24
Children’s Mass: 4:00pm in the Church
Youth Mass: 4:00pm in the Parish Hall
Mass: 6:00pm in the Church
Mass with Adult Choir: 10:00pm in the Church
(Christmas Carols begin at 9:30pm)

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25
Masses: 8:30am and 10:30am in the Church

New Year’s Day (Solemnity of Mary)
Wednesday, January 1
Mass for the Solemnity of Mary: 10:00am
We encourage you to register in the parish so that you can receive regular communication via both email and regular mail. Registration information is essential for responding to request to be sponsors/godparents and other ministries. Please register at www.santamariaorinda.com/registration

For the Sick
Liduvina Acosta, Sonny Acosta, Mary Beth Alban, Joan Artmann, Shoaib Aryan, Kristy Blackey-Taylor, Kathie Brady, Cara Bradbury, Mike Buzzell, Maria Carmen, Rosemary Catton, Delores Codde, Grace Parent DeBoodt, Rich Delany, Lorna Elliott, Anne Emery, Nora Enriquez, Emidio Fonseca, Liam Foley, Patricia Fox, Bridget Gallagher, Noreen Gillham, Paul Guess, Doris Hale, Florentino Ibabao, Brian Kelly, Mason Kelly, Aileen Kelly, Jim Kennedy, Jerry Kirk, Lawrence Knapp, Carol Koupus, Judy Lazarus, Jim Marchetti, Rose Mary McPhee, Robert Nick, Arsi Orihuella, Deacon Jim Pearce, Kathleen Pelz, Ann Powell, Mark Ricci, Ben Richey, Patrick Sheehy, Faye Young

Would you like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list? Please contact Mirna in the Parish Office at 925-254-2426 or at mirnawong@smparish.org.

Monday, December 23
8:00am: Maria Phan Thi Diu (D)

Tuesday, December 24
8:00am: Anna Phan Thi Tuyet (D)
4:00pm: Maria Phan Thi Oanh (I)
6:00pm: Thomas Dang Ba Viec (I)
10:00pm: Parishioners of Santa Maria

Wednesday, December 25
8:30am: Stephen & Tom O’Brien (D)
10:30am: Thomas Tran Kim Son (D)

Thursday, December 26
8:00am: John Rogina (D)

Friday, December 27
8:00am: Joseph Tran Van Hinh (D)

Saturday, December 28
5:00pm: Parishioners of Santa Maria

Sunday, December 29
8:30am: George & Annette Mein (I)
10:30am: James G. Walsh (D)
5:00pm: Susan & Edward Abinsay (D)

I=Intentions of [N.]; D=Deceased
To request a Mass Intention, please contact Mirna in the Parish Office.

We encourage you to have Masses said for all of your loved ones, or for your own intentions!
Christmas Card Party

HANDMADE CARDS FOR OUR SICK AND HOMEBOUND PARISHIONERS