

JMJ

Dear Parishioners,

Advent is, par excellence, the season of hope. Every year this basic spiritual attitude is reawakened in the hearts of Christians, who, while they prepare to celebrate the great Feast of Christ the Saviour's Birth, revive the expectation of his glorious second coming at the end of time. The first part of Advent insists precisely on the parousia, the final coming of the Lord. The antiphons of these First Vespers are all oriented, with different nuances, to this perspective. The short Reading from the First Letter to the Thessalonians (5: 23-34) refers explicitly to the final coming of Christ using precisely the Greek term parousia (see v. 23). The Apostle urges Christians to keep themselves sound and blameless, but above all encourages them to trust in God, who "is faithful" (v. 24) and will not fail to bring about this sanctification in all who respond to his grace.

From the outset, as becomes clear in the New Testament and especially in the Letters of the Apostles, a new hope distinguishes Christians from those who live in pagan religiosity. In writing to the Ephesians, St Paul reminds them that before embracing faith in Christ, they had "no hope and [were] without God in the world" (2: 12). This appears an especially apt description for the paganism of our day: in particular, we might compare it with the contemporary nihilism that corrodes the hope in man's heart, inducing him to think that within and around him nothingness prevails: nothing before birth and nothing after death. In fact, if God is lacking, hope is lacking. Everything loses its "substance". It is as if the dimension of depth were missing and everything were flattened out and deprived of its symbolic relief, its "projection" in comparison with mere materiality. At stake is the relationship between existence here and now and what we call the "hereafter": this is not a place in which we end up after death; on the contrary, it is the reality of God, the fullness of life towards which every human being is, as it were, leaning. God responded to this human expectation in Christ with the gift of hope.

Man is the one creature free to say "yes" or "no" to eternity, that is, to God. The human being is able to extinguish hope within him, eliminating God from his life. How can this be? How can it happen that the creature "made for God", intimately oriented to Him, the creature closest to the Eternal One, can deprive himself of this richness? God knows the human heart. He knows that those who reject Him have not recognized His true Face, and so He never ceases to knock at our door like a humble pilgrim in search of hospitality. This is why the Lord grants humanity new time: so that everyone may manage to know Him! This is also the meaning of a new liturgical year which is beginning: it is a gift of God, who once again wishes to reveal himself to us in the mystery of Christ, through the Word and the Sacraments. He wants to speak to humanity and to save the people of today through the Church. And He does so by going out to meet them in order "to seek and to save the lost" (Lk 19: 10). In this perspective, the celebration of Advent is the answer of the Church-Bride to the ever new initiative of God the Bridegroom, "who is and who was and who is to come" (Rv 1: 8). God offers to humanity, which no longer has time for Him, further time, a new space in which to withdraw into itself in order to set out anew on a journey to rediscover the meaning of hope.

Here, then, is the surprising discovery: my, our hope is preceded by the expectation which God cultivates in our regard! Yes, God loves us and for this very reason expects that we return to Him, that we open our hearts to His love, that we place our hands in His and remember that we are His children. This attitude of God always precedes our hope, exactly as His love always reaches us first (see I Jn 4: 10). In this sense Christian hope is called "theological": God is its source, support and end. What a great consolation there is in this mystery! My Creator has instilled in my spirit a reflection of His desire of life for all. Every person is called to hope, responding to the expectations that God has of him. Moreover, experience shows us that it is exactly like this. What keeps the world going other than God's trust in humankind? It is a trust reflected in the hearts of the lowly, the humble, when they strive daily to do their best through difficulties and labors, to do that little bit of good which is nonetheless great in God's eyes: in the family, in the work place, at school, in the various social contexts. Hope is indelibly engraved in the human heart because God our Father is life, and for eternal life and beatitude we are made.

Every child born is a sign of trust in God and man and a confirmation, at least implicit, of the hope in a future open to God's eternity that is nourished by men and women. God has responded to this human hope, concealing himself in time as a tiny human being. Saint Augustine wrote: "We might have thought that your Word was far distant from union with man, if this Word had not become flesh and dwelt among us". Thus, let us allow ourselves to be guided by the One who in her heart and in her womb bore the Incarnate Word. O Mary, Virgin of expectation and Mother of hope, revive the spirit of Advent in your entire Church, so that all humanity may start out anew on the journey towards Bethlehem, from which it came, and that the Sun that dawns upon us from on high will come once again to visit us (see Lk 1: 78), Christ our God. Amen.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
*Father Newcomb****Liturgical Ministers for December 7th/8th, 2019***

Mass	Lector	Ministers of Holy Communion	Altar Servers
4:00pm	D. LEGATO	J. FLYNN, W. PONDS	J. LEGATO
8:30am	M. LATINI	A. WITKOWSKI, T. CALVARIO	E. AND A. WITKOWSKI
11:30am	H. MARINARO	T. MARION, D. FISHER	Z. ADAMCIK, K. AND A. EPPS



Bake Sale

The Senior and Junior Choirs will be holding a bake sale the weekend of December 7th/8th after all Masses to help defray the cost of the musicians for Christmas.



The 2nd collection the weekend of December 14th/15th is for the Retired Religious. Please give it your prayerful consideration.

As tradition holds, there will be a Giving Tree in the Narthex. Please consider making a donation. All donations are split between the Elks Club and the Rotary Club at the Port Jervis High School.



Our Food Basket Collection is well under way. We are still in need of jelly, canned fruit, gravy, soup, vegetables, stuffing, cereal, pasta and sauce, etc. We do not need any peanut butter.

We will be collecting hams and turkeys on Monday, December 16th from 4-6pm. Thank You!

There will be a Holy Hour for Life on Sunday, December 8th at 9pm in the Chapel.

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, December 8th - Feast of the Immaculate Conception Brunch Join us after the 11:30 a.m. Mass at Most Sacred Heart Hall as we honor Mary and celebrate our Parish Feast Day. Kindly RSVP to danilegyoungliving@gmail.com by December 4th or call the parish office.

Sounds of the Season - Annual Christmas Caroling Join us Tuesday, December 17th, and help share the joy of the season with all. We will meet at 4:15 p.m. in the lobby at Bon Secours hospital.

We now have Eucharistic Adoration cards available. For a donation, you can gift a card for Christmas, birthdays, get well, etc. and spend time with our Lord. They are available in the parish office.

Reconciliation Monday will be on December 16th. Confessions will be heard throughout the Archdiocese from 4pm until 8pm.

The collection for November 23/24 was \$5,626.50
Thank you for your continued generosity.

Announced Masses

- Monday, December 2**
9:00am Richard Andrew Hagen, by the Hagen fam. Intentions of Rachel and Brian Cimbak, by the Webb family
- Tuesday, December 3 (Francis Xavier, priest)**
9:00am Intentions of Allan Garcia, by Nenita Costescu
- Wednesday, December 4 (John Damascene, priest and doctor of the Church)**
9:00am James C. Newcomb
- Thursday, December 5**
9:00am Liza Rodriguez, by the Brito family
- Friday, December 6 (Nicholas, bishop)**
11:30am Jerry Dilger, by Ann and Richard Dilger
- Saturday, December 7 (Ambrose, bishop)**
4:00pm Stephen Westfall, by Catherine Westfall and family
- Sunday, December 8**
8:30am The parishioners of St. Mary's
11:30am Anthony S. Adorno, by mom and dad



The Sanctuary Lamp will burn brightly this week for the living and deceased members of the Klostermeier family, by Irene Klostermeier.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK: Donald Wolff, Carol Gomillion, David Lisker, Nancy Parsons, Debi Cotugno, Michael Barnes, William Lincoln, Jeannine Lincoln, James Lincoln, Charles Hildebrandt, Maureen Hildebrandt, Walter Szpakowicz, Carmella Balsamello, Aedan Roach, Robin Radzikowski, James Roach, Catherine Simons, Brendan Carmody, Joe Formisano, Nico Nicolette, Jaryd Viserta, Steven Gaesser, Kacey Warner, Sandra Ramsey, Lorraine Mannarino, Antonino Mazzara, Elizabeth Startup Jones, Mary Lynn Beam, Jose Ramos, Carmen Ramos, Mercedes Rodriguez, Jose Brito, Michael Medaglia, Barbara Straub, Tress Loughrey, Sal Careri, Cody Bain, Robert Witherow, Susan Upton, Theresa Fuller, Allen Lynch, Enid Decker, Jackie Mundy, Chris Marion, III, Carmella Balsamello, Barbara Lindsay, Robert Ackerman, Wayne DeMarco, Ryan O'Connor, Elizabeth Brennan, Jerri Kavanaugh, Allan Garcia, Christine Haberzettl, Eric Hildebrandt, Rose Gotthardt, Georgia Gotthardt, and John Olenick.

What will an increase in your offertory cost you? Your increased donation is an investment in the future of our parish. Please consider what you can do to help.

<p>\$5</p>	<p>\$10</p>
<p>\$15</p>	<p>\$20</p>