

this week ...

**We WATCH.  
We want to see!**

*First Sunday of  
Advent*



*San Ignacio de Loyola Parish*

*November 30, 2014*

## REFLECTION ON THE WORD

“**A**s it was in the days . . . so it will be” - with these words Jesus points to patterns in human conduct. Humans have been both unfaithful and faithful to God’s ways; have not paid attention and have paid attention to God’s instructions; have not been awake, have stayed awake to God’s



comings. The people in the days of Noah did not know that the flood was coming; Jesus’ hearers did not know when the Son of Man would come. We, however, do know that Jesus has come, has taught us the way of faithfulness, has brought us salvation. **Advent** is about *our* coming to God. Our staying awake is a matter of preparing well for the divine Guest who dwells in our hearts always.

**Words to reflect upon:**

**Advent** is about *our* coming to God

**Holy Spirit, unite me  
with all those who love you!**

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,*

*1 Timothy 2:1*

**LET US PRAY TOGETHER TODAY** for the chronically ill:

Sylvia Tasner, Jerry Vega, Fr. Vega, Fr. Talbot, **Maggie Maziarz**, Rudy & Sonia Méndez, Carola Murray and Peter Fiorito. *Let us join as a community of faith and together learn to hum hope and dance the*



*divine during this beautiful season of **Advent**.*

## BECOMING AN ADVENT PERSON

### Advent: Gestating Hope Into Reality

Hope is not wishful thinking, natural optimism, or an educated theory based upon CNN. Indeed, **hope is not wishful thinking**, the simple longing for something wonderful to happen to us. I can wish to win a lottery, marry the most beautiful person in the world, or score the winning goal in the world cup, but that isn’t hope. It’s pure wish. Similarly, **hope is not optimism**; a natural temperament, however pleasant, which is perennially upbeat and always sees the positive side of things. Finally, **hope is also not a positive diagnosis** based upon a shrewd assessment of the facts. Jim Wallis once quipped: “Put not your faith in CNN!” The same holds true for BBC, CBC, NBC, ABC, ITV, SKY NEWS, and WORLD NEWS. One does not ultimately ground hope on whether the world situation seems to be improving or worsening. Hope does not go up and down like the stock market because, in the end, it is not based upon the empirical facts as these are reported on the news. (to be continued)

— a love poem from God

### Laughter Came From Every Brick

Just these two words He spoke changed my life;  
“Enjoy Me.”

What a burden I thought I was to carry—a crucifix,  
as did he.

Love once said to me, “I know a song, would you like  
to hear it?”

And laughter came from every brick in the street  
and from every pore in the sky.

After a night of prayer, He changed my life when He  
sang,

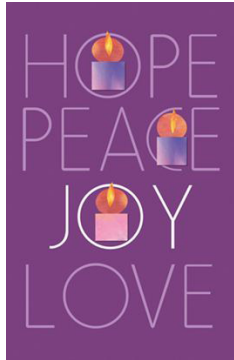
“Enjoy Me!”

— St. Teresa of Avila

## — THE LITURGICAL CORNER

Today we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent.

**Advent** is that unchangeable season when the same concepts, the same words rise over and over again, year after year, to challenge our hearts and plague our minds. **Advent** is the season of waiting. And who hasn't waited? When we are little children, we wait for gifts from our parents. When we are young adults, we wait for the lover who will take us to the magic world of Everything.



The problem is that the presents pale and the magic world sags all too quickly into reality. But then **Advent** comes, relentlessly and throughout life, with its words of hope and faith — shepherds and magi, crib and star, Emmanuel and glory — and stirs our hearts to pinnacles of possibility one more time. Ruben A. Alvez wrote, "Hope is hearing the melody of the future; faith is dancing to it today." The real Christmas gift, for which **Advent** is the process, **is learning to hum hope, learning to dance the divine.**

## We wait. Come, Lord Jesus!

**Hope is hearing the melody of the future;  
faith is dancing to it today.**

Since we await the **Prince of Peace**, we are advised in *Isaiah 2:1-5*, to work toward peace by turning implements of war into tools with which to till the soil. If



we were to take Isaiah at his word, how might the lot of humankind be improved! Many think that wars will cease when the Messiah appears, but Isaiah tells us that the cessation of all wars and violence is the means by which we prepare for his Advent.

In **Islam**, each of the Quran's suras, save one, begins by invoking God's mercy and that, of all the names for God, those evoking God's mercy are the most frequently used.

## Praying with Scripture

### Holding Hands with God

The readings of Isaiah are so moving during **Advent**, calling us to consider our relationship with God in new ways. Isaiah invites us to consider a relationship with God on a very deep and personal level, to feel comforted, loved and protected. Isaiah offers us a God who rejoices in us and celebrates us with banquets of rich wines and choice food. There is a constant exhortation not to be afraid.

*I am the LORD, your God, who grasp your right hand  
It is I who say to you, "Fear not, I will help you."*

Isaiah 41:13

I have read these words every **Advent** for years, focused on the words, "Fear not." But one morning as I looked at this passage, I noticed the beginning of it,

*"I am the Lord, your God who grasp your right hand."*

It was fairly specific. Not that I was reaching out to God, but that God was reaching out to me – and grasping me by my right hand. How wonderful. I relaxed into that image and tried to picture that. What would it be like to have God hold my right hand? Terrible! I couldn't do anything!

I am right-handed and if God is holding onto it, how would I get all of my things done? I am a busy, busy person (sometimes so busy that I am coming and going at the same time). With my right hand un-usable, I couldn't drive, use the computer or grab my mobile phone. If I really ponder the image of the Lord grasping my right hand, it takes me several minutes to get beyond, "I can't get anything done!" Then I pause in my mental distress and hold this dilemma up to God as an offering: "What now, God?"

*I am the LORD, your God, who grasp your right hand ...  
I will help you.*

I can see that the passage means that I can't do it all alone. I am strong, busy, independent and apparently somewhat arrogant. I want to do it all myself. How do I share my life and my work with a God who at the moment seems to be hampering my progress?

That's where the Isaiah reading adds, "It is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'"

I really, really don't have to do it alone. I can step off my self-imposed pedestal and join the rest of the human race in asking for help.

I can ask God every morning to open my heart in new ways for the freedom to accept what God wants for me - not what I want for me. I can realize that God stands ready, cherishing me every moment, holding my hand and offering me a banquet.

*I am the LORD, your God,  
who grasp your right hand;  
It is I who say to you,  
"Fear not, I will help you."*

by Maureen M. Waldron, *Creighton's Online Ministries*