

he shall be peace!

Fourth Sunday of Advent



San Ignacio de Loyola Parish

December 20, 2015

REFLECTION ON THE WORD

Responding to the angel's admonition not to be afraid, Joseph does more than take Mary into his home as a wife. He also is making a dwelling place for "Emmanuel...God with us". This story, which begins



with the yes of Joseph and Mary, continues through history with our yes to opening ourselves to God's dwelling among us. The birth of this child isn't simply a historical event that happened long ago but is a present experience of "God with us". Though unnamed in the gospels, we are to be the Josephs who dream and the Marys who give birth to this

child who saves. "This is how the birth of Jesus (comes) about": **we** make a home for Emmanuel whenever we make a home for those around us. **We** are now to be the risen presence of Christ in our world, we are to make his gospel known, and **we** are to do all that God commands us too. This is how "God is with us". This is how **we** live, truly, in our dream home.

Words to reflect upon: *This is how "God is with us"*

*We believe! Come, Lord Jesus!
Come and visit your people.
We are waiting.
Come quickly!*

MISA DE GALLO

The Misa de Gallo (literally Rooster Mass) continues an old Spanish tradition in Puerto Rico. (The rooster as a Christian symbol responds to an ancient legend that says that the only time the rooster crowed at midnight was the night that Jesus was born.) Of course, we recognize the Misa de Gallo as our traditional Christmas Midnight Mass.

Our 9:30 Community's "**Misa de Pollo**" is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on the 24th. Carolling starts at 7:00. So pick up your family and friends and get to church early for a beautiful beginning to our Christmas liturgy.



EXPERIENCING ADVENT DEEPLY

The Final Days of Advent--Getting to the Manger

So often the final days before Christmas become a blur of activity. Hopefully, this year, we have gotten good at using the background time each day to focus our reflection and conversation with God the Father and with Jesus. Now that we come to the hectic days, we can choose to stay focused right up to and including Christmas. One of the special ways to do that is to not lose the manger. It is the central piece of the story and it is loaded with meaning and message, consolation and fruit for us. The richest of the *Advent experiences* are here--in letting ourselves imagine the Holy Family of Joseph and Mary arriving in Bethlehem for the census, having nowhere to stay. A special transformation begins to happen the day before Christmas when we start to imagine the stable where our Savior was born. It is the deepening antidote to some of the excesses of Christmas preparations-- too much glitz, maybe too much drinking, celebrations which are quite a few degrees off center. It is there in the stable, in its humble feeding trough that one will find the fulfillment of all longing and hope. In that poverty, our Savior, our Light and our Peace reveals to us the Good News he came to bring. **He came into this world as he would leave it--humble and dependent upon God.**

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PRAYING WITH ISAIAH DURING ADVENT

Observe what is right, do what is just; for my salvation is about to come, my justice, about to be revealed.

Isaiah 56

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, and saying to Zion, "Your God is King!" **Isaiah 52**

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, Albert and Jerry Vega, Fr. Vega, **Maggie Maziarz** who is very ill, Rudy & Sonia Méndez,.



This last Sunday of Advent let's pray together as a community in a very special way for all our loved ones—past and present—who contribute in such special ways to our Christmas Joy

**WE BELIEVE!
WE SEE!
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

December 25, 2015



*the Nativity of
Our Lord Jesus Christ*

A CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

How Jesus Came Into This World And Why

The story behind these days draws all of us in, inviting us to contemplate the mystery of how Jesus came into this world and why. He came in the midst of scandal and conflict. He came in poverty.



He was rejected before he was even born. He was born in a stable; he was hunted down. He grew up in obscurity.

He did not shun our world and its poverty and conflict. He embraced it. And he desires to embrace us today--right where we are, right where we are feeling most distant, right where we are feeling least "religious" or "ready". If we open our hearts and invite him in, even in these challenging circumstances, we can find ourselves entering the sacred night and morning of Christmas "joyful and triumphant" as never before.

Peace in the sign of the Jubilee of Mercy

In the spirit of the **Jubilee of Mercy**, all of us are called to realize how indifference can manifest itself in our lives and to work concretely to improve the world around us, beginning with our families, neighbors and work places.

I would like to make a threefold appeal to the leaders of nations: to refrain from drawing other peoples into conflicts which destroy not only their material, cultural and social legacy, but also their moral and spiritual integrity; to forgive or manage in a sustainable way the international debt of the poorer nations; and to adopt policies of cooperation which, instead of bowing before the dictatorship of certain ideologies, will respect the values of local populations.

— Pope Francis

"MY SOUL PROCLAIMS THE GREATNESS OF GOD!"

— Mary of Nazareth,
Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8

GIVE THANKS WITH GREAT JOY!

We have prayed,

*"Come, Lord Jesus. Come and visit your people.
We await your coming. Come, oh Lord!"*

Now our eyes are opened to the wondrous joy of his coming to us in that manger 2,000 years ago, so that we will know and understand his coming to us in our hunger today, and ultimately, so that we will long for his final coming, to bring us to the banquet that has been prepared, to fill all our longing. **It is right, then, to give thanks, with great joy.**

A Prayer for Christmas

*Lord, grant me courage,
Lord, grant me strength,
Grant me compassion
That I may be your heart today.
When comes the day I dread
To see our broken world,
Protect me from myself grown cold
That your people I may behold
Lord, give me hope,
That I may be your heart today.*

Christmas is not meant to leave us with nothing more than a child's perception of what it means to see a baby in a manger scene. It is meant to take us to the level of spiritual maturity where we are capable of seeing in a manger the meaning of an empty tomb. It is meant to enable us to see through the dark days of life to the stars beyond them.

*Merry Christmas to all from your bulletin editors!
May the celebration of God's birth lead us to seek new ways
of bringing God's love to the world...*

A Christmas Promise

**I will light candles this Christmas:
Candles of joy, despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fear's ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long!**