A purple-toned illustration featuring a hand pointing downwards from a face in the sky. The hand is the central focus, with fingers extended. Above the hand, a face is visible, looking down. The background consists of swirling, cloud-like patterns. Overlaid on the image is the text "Be watchful! Be alert!" in a cursive font.

*"Be watchful!
Be alert!"*

MARK 13:33



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THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT NOVEMBER 29, 2020

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Mass of Anticipation for 1st Sunday of Advent

4:00PM Teresa Romano—1st Anniversary

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

The First Sunday of Advent

7:30 AM Teresa Romano—1st Anniversary

9:00AM The Parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy

10:30AM Francis X. Ferris—1st Anniversary

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

St. Andrew, Apostle

7:30AM Mary E. Healey—41st Anniversary

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1

Advent Weekday

7:30AM Neal J. Armstrong—Birthday Remembrance

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Advent Weekday

7:30AM Teresa M. Romano—Memorial

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3

St. Francis Xavier, Priest

7:30AM Emily Devlin—63rd Anniversary

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

Advent Weekday; St. John Damascene, Priest & Doctor of the Church

7:30AM Special Intention

9:00AM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5

Advent Weekday

8:30AM Fr. Stanley T. Nakowicz—9th Anniversary

Mass of Anticipation for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

4:00PM Salvatore DiStefano—30th Anniversary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

The Second Sunday of Advent

7:30 AM Peter & Gloria Monti—Memorial

9:00AM Kevin Durnin—10th Anniversary

10:30AM Gay McCreery—Memorial





Dear Parishioners:

Sunday, we begin the holy season of Advent, a time to pause and consider the importance of this time of preparation and watchful waiting.

The Advent Season is often overshadowed by the "holiday season" as we move too quickly into celebrating Christmas. By the time that the actual solemnity of Christmas arrives, many of us are exhausted. We are already tired of all the "Christmas hype." Christmas has become anticlimactic.

The word Advent comes from the Latin for "coming" or "arrival." The Church teaches: *"The season of Advent has a twofold character: It is a time of preparation for Christmas when the first coming of God's Son ... is recalled. It is also a season when minds are directed by this memorial to Christ's second coming at the end of time. It is thus a season of joyful and spiritual expectation."*

Advent is a season of joyful hope, a time of preparation and waiting as we prepare for Christ. This season is not just about preparing for the birth of Christ at Christmas. But also the Christ continually being born in our midst who transforms the Church.

In these dark days of the pandemic, the Church calls us to gather and quietly wait in hope for the coming of Christ, Her bridegroom, the Light of the World. Is our hope really in Christ? Do we allow ourselves to wait in silence and ponder the great mystery of salvation?

In the darkness, we watch for the coming Lord. We

must not let our fears, doubts, or our busyness distract us from this watchful waiting. The season calls us to be attentive to our preparations for the final day and attentive to the quality of our life in union with Christ.

During these four weeks, we prepare for the Light, which comes into the world, both in Christ's birth and as we await his final return in glory. I know it is an enormous challenge to remain faithful to the Advent season when we are surrounded by a society which, while claiming to be Christian, does not take the time to reflect and prepare as the Church calls us to do.

The season of Advent refocuses us and reminds us that Christ has changed the world. Darkness has descended, and the world itself is quiet. We know that Christ reigns over all of creation. We strain in the darkness to see the Light of Christ, our coming King.

May our observance of this season renew us and be an example of prayer, patience, silence, and joy in our hurried and anxious society. May it help us to see the Light of Christ amidst the darkness of the world.

To be sure, Advent 2020 is likely to be very different amid the pandemic's social restrictions and isolation from family and community. Indeed, we need Christ to come into the world all the more. However, perhaps these restrictions afford us a real opportunity to enter into the spirit of the Advent season more fully.

The secular distractions of parties and shopping are restricted, and so we have a unique opportunity to prayerfully

and authentically prepare for Christ's coming.

Let's limit the secular celebration of Christmas and take up Advent's call to joyfully, and patiently, anticipate the real Christmas. Let's strive all the more to make Advent memorable. Not only because we are in a pandemic but instead because we strive to make more time for God.

Let's not keep God socially distant. Instead, let us take more time in our lives for prayer, Mass, and Confession. Let's make it memorable with more good deeds and acts of charity for the poor and the needy, the sick and suffering. As we reduce the parties and shopping, let us joyfully increase faith, hope, and joy in our world, our families, and our parish.

We sing the ancient Advent chant, *"O Come, O Come Emmanuel,"* to remind us that Christ is coming. May our Advent prayer and devotion spur us to an awakening in our faith life and put us in a 'vigilant' disposition to wait for Our Lord Jesus who is coming.

Pope *Emeritus* Benedict XVI states: *"Awaken! Remember that God comes! Not yesterday, not tomorrow, but today, now! The one true God, 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', is not a God who is there in Heaven, unconcerned with us and our history, but he is the-God-who-comes."*

Be Well. Do Good. God Bless.

Ask Father

May a Catholic be Cremated?

As we continue to talk about the Last Things in the month of November we come to the topic of cremations. The quick and easy answer is that the Church does not forbid cremation, unless it is chosen for reasons that are contrary to Christian teaching. In fact if a person were to choose cremation for reasons which go against our Lord's teaching, such a person would not be fit for a funeral (since at that point they have, essentially, renounced his teachings).

What would these reasons be? For instance, one reason is the disbelief in the resurrection from the dead at the end of the world. Other reasons would be a disdain for the body, thinking that the material world is evil, wanting to spread the ashes over the ocean or keep them at home (usually this implies a strange anthropology, and a mistaken view that we become one with the universe), and so on.

Historically and even today the Church prefers burial of a body over cremation and advocates for it as much as possible. Cremation should not be seen as another equal option, but something chosen due to perhaps a lack of finances (funerals are incredibly expensive), a distant place of burial (the person wants to be buried back in a home country), and so on. These are very practical, non-theological concerns.

The reason why the Church prefers burial of a body has its roots in theology and this has not changed. Since Catholics believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the dignity of the human body as created by God, it is only logical that Catholicism also holds that the body of a deceased person should be handled with respect. Consequently, burning it has not traditionally been considered acceptable treatment.

For a while the Church forbade cremation because of its close association with paganism, which did not believe in the resurrection. This is the reason for the early Christians in Rome burying their dead separately in the catacombs. In the past it was automatically assumed that a Catholic who had himself/herself cremated had abandoned hope in the resurrection of the body or was actively mocking it.

In your planning I would suggest the following: cremate the body after the funeral if possible. This way the full symbolism of the funeral Mass can be seen by all those present (sprinkling the body with holy water, incensing the body, draping a white cloth over the body, and so on). After cremation the remains are to be treated with the same respect given to the human body from which they came. This includes the use of a worthy vessel to contain the ashes, the manner in which they are carried, the care and attention to appropriate placement and transport, and the final disposition. Finally, the cremated remains should be buried in a grave or entombed in a mausoleum or columbarium.

Weekly Collection

Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday deadline, the weekly collection results are not available this week.

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 —St. Ambrose



• **OLM Food Pantry** is always in **need of food and paper goods** for the members of our local community. **Stop & Shop Gift Cards are needed for Christmas.** Please drop them in the safe in the vestibule and place all donated non-perishable foods and paper goods in the box in the vestibule of Church or the box on the porch of Mercy House.

Thank you for your support!

• For information, please contact the OLM Outreach Director, Doug Green at 401-884-4410 or via email at outreach@olmparish.org



Striving to be Saints & Scholars!

Upcoming School Events

• **Friday, December 4:** First Friday Mass 9:00AM (livestreamed)

We are looking for substitute teachers for OLM School. If interested, please contact OLM School Principal, Mr. Patrick McNabb at 401-884-1618

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• **First Communion Class (2020-21):** Family Mass & Class on Sunday, December 6th at 5:00PM. **Only First Communion students & families may attend Mass,** followed by brief Family Catechesis Class.

• **Confirmation Class (2020-21):** Next Family Mass & Class on Sunday, December 13th at 5:00PM. **Only Confirmation students & families may attend Mass,** followed by brief Family Catechesis Class.

1st Sunday of Advent



Today is the First Sunday of Advent, the first day of the new liturgical year.

Advent, which always begins on the Sunday closest to November 30, dates back to the fourth century.

It is a four-week period of devout and joyful preparation for the celebration of Christmas and for Christ's second coming at the end of time.

Early in Advent, the liturgy focuses our attention on the second coming. After December 16, it shifts our attention to the events surrounding the nativity.



This bulletin insert was written by Marion Eagen, a liturgist and musician in the diocese of Scranton, Pa. © 2002 Resource Publications, Inc., 160 E. Virginia St. #290, San Jose, CA 95112, (408) 286-8505. All rights reserved.

Christmas Anticipation Prayer ¶

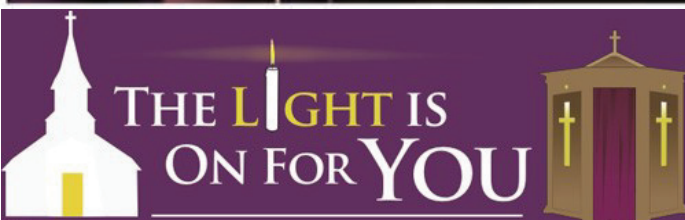


HAIL AND BLESSED be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayers and grant my desires, through the merits of Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother. Amen. ¶

Beginning on the feast of St. Andrew, November 30, the following prayer is traditionally recited 15 times a day until Christmas. ¶

Advent

**Our Lord
Jesus,
Light in the
Darkness**



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