

**Little house of prayer for the week of Nov 27 – Dec 03, 2011 – HAPPY NEW LITURGICAL YEAR!!!**

**First Sunday of Advent (BEGINNING OF CYCLE “B”)**

**“Not knowing the time of the Lord’s Second Coming invites us to remain vigilant”**

## **1. The Word of God**

**Reading 1 – Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7**

You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

**The Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God**

**Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19**

**R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.  
Rouse your power, and come to save us.

Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine,  
and protect what your right hand has planted the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.  
Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

**Reading 2 – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**The Word of the Lord / Thanks be to God**

**Proclamation of the Holy Gospel according to Mark (Mark 13:33-37) +++ Glory to you, Lord**

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: "Watch!"

**The Gospel of the Lord / Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

## **2. References for a better understanding of the Gospel**

Advent is a special time of reflection, meditation and contemplation...

The liturgical year is over and a new cycle in the Liturgy of the Church is about to begin. Time does not stop; it is like water running through our fingers, and so, we continue to age and die, which is the only way that we, **absolutely everyone**, have to live, without exception!

While we live, all of us die, little by little. The point is to see how, by making use of the freedom that God has given us, we decide to spend our own lives (which in truth is less "ours" than we believe).

Some will spend it making money or looking for ways to make money, perhaps at the expense of others; others will try to enjoy as much as possible, without sparing pleasures, licit or illicit; others will spend it trying to attain prestige or fame, or pretending to be admired, respected, loved, valued, envied, considered, pitied, and so on.

There may be some that will spend their entire lives trying to do good, to serve only the Lord and others, to fulfill the Will of God in every way; to surrender, like Christ did, to God the Father and to humanity. And finally, there are those of us who want to convert, but still navigate between both waters; we give ourselves to God, but from time to time, we also look for the things of the world, honor or recognition.

For those of us, more or less spiritual and more or less worldly, our Founding Mother has written a brief reflection on the occasion of Advent, which we transcribe below.

*"This first Sunday of Advent, all of us Christians carry in our hearts, a hope that transcends time, because the very same Lord is our hope for peace and happiness, because with His coming, He has opened for men, paths of light that will take us the happiness of Eternal Life. Therefore, our hope does not stop with the celebration of Christmas... our great advent is for the Kingdom of God.*

*The incapacity of a human being to find fulfillment as an individual, who is at the same time part of a society, precisely originates from being away from God. We become incapable of attaining happiness, not only by staying away from the Church, from the Bible and prayer, but by staying away from God and His justice.*

*The Prophet Isaiah told God: "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you..."*

*Living Advent does not mean being vigilantly afraid of our own death or the judgement of God, but staying awake, ready to serve and work, striving to make this a better world.*

*We cannot be like the animals, who follow a way simply because it has been marked for them by those who are leading, irrational, unaware, well trained, but incapable of accepting real commitments in the construction of the Kingdom, that Kingdom of God that is both the seed that we will plant in this life, but hope and harvest for Eternal Life.*

*Jesus tells us: "Watch! And being vigilant means, elevating the soul beyond the pleasures of this world (like money, excessive work, satisfaction of the senses...) because through all those pleasures, we get caught up in a tremendous sense of selfishness, where there is no room for anyone but ourselves, and maybe just a small group of relatives and friends, when our destiny should be to follow Christ and surrender our lives "for many."*

*"Be vigilant," He says, that we will take care of the real values in life, to get deep into our faith, that we will live a time of interior growth, striving to improve our relationship with the Lord, so we can show true solidarity to those who need us the most.*

*Let us then live this Advent for that which is proper of the souls who need God; to awaken each of those aspects that must be awakened within us, that we may be happier than the average souls, who in their search for worldly possessions and pleasures, miss the extraordinary beauty of having a friendship with the living God, Who is always with us, and Who, year after year, renews His coming to save us.*

*May this time of Advent that begins today, be different for us our families. Let us give the gift to our loved ones of showing them how to enjoy the interior more than the exterior things.*

*Let us begin our preparations to spend Christmas at the Cave, at the Manger, contemplating the great mystery of our salvation, next to that beautiful Child, from that family that was born from an eternity of Love from the Father. Let us begin to have moments of silence, of dialogue with the Lord, of prayers to the Holy Spirit, that God will prepare our hearts and we may live intensely throughout our celebration....*

*Let us ask Virgin Mary that She, as Mother and Lady of the first and second Advent, will care for us and teach us to take care of every detail in this internal preparation, because no one knows better than Mary what Jesus likes.*

*Happy and Holy Advent to each and every member of our dear "Houses of Prayer!"*

## **Catalina**

**3. Questions to lead the reflection** (*Read each item slowly, and leave a moment of silence after each question to allow our brothers and sisters to reflect*):

- a) Do I live my life awaiting the return of Jesus as a sign of hope and joy for my salvation and the salvation of mankind?
- b) Do I try to live my life in such a way that the idea of my own death does not disturb my peace or scare me? Do I rather envision my own death as the joyful coronation of this earthly stage of my soul?
- c) Am I "vigilant," meaning, am I attentive, prepared, mindful and careful of the distractions that frequently occur?
- d) During this time of Advent, do I have a particular purpose in mind while I wait for the birth of Baby Jesus? How will help others to take full advantage of this liturgical time...?
- e) How can my spiritual life take a step forward in this new liturgical year?

**4. Comments from the brothers and sisters:** *After a few moments of silence, the participants of the Little House of Prayer will be given time to speak, to express their opinions, reflections and comments. As always, we will seek everyone's participation.*

## **5. Concordances between the Holy Gospel and the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

### **Faith tells us: 1001 (Surely they know not the hour)**

**1001** *When?* Definitely "at the last day," "at the end of the world." Indeed, the resurrection of the dead is closely associated with Christ's Parousia:

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 1 Tes 4:16

### **Our Response: 524 (Update of the expectation of Christ) 1821 (Hope in God's promises)**

**524** When the Church celebrates *the liturgy of Advent* each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: "He must increase, but I must decrease.

**1821** We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love him and do his will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere "to the end" and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ. In hope, the Church prays for "all men to be saved." She longs to be united with Christ, her Bridegroom, in the glory of heaven:

Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly, even though your impatience makes doubtful what is certain, and turns a very short time into a long one. Dream that the more you struggle, the more you prove the love that you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end.

## **6. Reflection with the Great Crusade – CL 156 – Jesus**

Wait attentively for My Return, I am the Future, that future that good and trusting souls wait for. My children, you who accept My instructions will remain with the secured Bread; I have multiplied My Sacred Body for My followers, so that they will not go hungry nor thirsty like My poor haughty children who remain outside the home. If necessary, I will send My Holy Angels to nourish them. Tell Me, children, can a responsible father leave his little ones in total abandon?

## **CS 144 – Jesus**

I call everyone to humble prayer, in order that My graces may not become useless by virtue of the many to whom My graces are being directed. All of you feared the future when years ago I began to warn you that I would return, that I would manifest Myself, that there would be darkness and that I would do great things in order that man see My power.

- 7. Final Comments or Questions:** *Once again, the participants will be given time to speak briefly about the excerpts from the Catechism, the Great Crusade or any other topic of interest to the House of Prayer, the Apostolate or the Church in general.*
- 8. Virtue of the Month:** **This month, we will practice the virtue of Humility (Catechism of the Catholic Church – Canons 2546, 2613, 2559, 2540, 1450)**

**This week, we will meditate upon Canon 2540, which textually says:**

**2540** Envy represents a form of sadness and therefore a refusal of charity; the baptized person should struggle against it by exercising good will. Envy often comes from pride; the baptized person should train himself to live in humility: Would you like to see God glorified by you? Then rejoice in your brother's progress and you will immediately give glory to God. Because his servant could conquer envy by rejoicing in the merits of others, God will be praised.

## **And the Great Crusade tells us: CL 127 – Jesus**

Renounce evil, arrogance, and destructive pride; accept the virtues I give you: humility, patience, faith, hope, and charity to the body and soul. Accept the virtue of loving the Love of Loves. It does not matter that you do not feel Me so perceptibly close, I am with you all until the consummation of time. I am the loving Father to whoever loves and obeys Me, and severe Judge to whoever refuses Me a heartbeat of love and obedience. His Misery is great, but My Mercy is infinite. Be tolerant towards your brethren, even when they walk away; not to everyone have I given ten talents... The sun does not cease shining during an eclipse; the celestial bodies are the ones that intervene and obstruct its vision. They are the nebulae of the faith!

## **9. Weekly purposes:**

**In relation to the Gospel:** I will remain vigilant for the Second Coming of the Lord. I will try to remain in a state of grace and go to confession as frequently as possible.

**In relation to this month's virtue:** Because I may deceive myself often, I will examine my attitudes to determine if these are of pride, superficiality or humility.