

## Second Sunday of Advent December 6, 2020

Every valley shall be filled in,  
every mountain and hill  
shall be made low.

— Isaiah 40:4

### GOD'S DELAY

In times of great difficulties scoffers taunt us, "Where is God? Why hasn't your Lord come to save you now?"

And we of faith respond much in the same way as Peter did in today's second reading: the "delay" of the Lord's second coming is not any type of punishment or failure to keep the divine promise, but a loving sign of God's patience. God is giving *everyone* the chance to seek repentance.

God does not make life more difficult. Rather, God lessens our burdens as once before for the Jewish exiles returning home to Judea after captivity in Babylon. It was God who personally led them, making a "straight highway" for them across the desert.

We join with our ancestors of faith, who hoped that they might see God's Chosen One before them and who eventually realized that the Lord was also walking with them side by side.

--J. S. Paluch Co.

### FEAST OF FAITH

#### Watching for Christ's Coming

In the season of Advent, we look to the coming of Christ at the end of time, and we prepare ourselves to celebrate his first coming among us at Christmas. Remembrance of the past is combined with preparation for the future. Memory meets action.

In a certain sense, the Mass is an Advent prayer. At the Last Supper, Jesus did not tell his disciples, "Never forget what I did for you." Instead, he said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He calls us to remember by *doing*, to combine memory with action. In the celebration of the Eucharist, remembering and doing become one. Jesus is as present in our midst as he was in that upper room, breaking the bread and sharing the cup; but it is a new kind of presence, seen only with the eyes of faith. In the heavenly liturgy, there will be no need of sacraments, for there, "celebration is wholly communion and feast" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1136). Here, things are different. We have only glimpses and flashes of the beauty that is yet to be. And yet, in the liturgy, we truly participate in the heavenly liturgy. The Mass is our foretaste of the joys of heaven.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

### READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Lk 5:17-26  
 Tuesday: Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38  
 Wednesday: Is 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10; Mt 11:28-30  
 Thursday: Is 41:13-20; Ps 145:1, 9, 10-13ab; Mt 11:11-15  
 Friday: Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4; Mt 11:16-19  
 Saturday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Jdt 13:18bcde, 19; Lk 26-38 or Lk 1:39-47  
 Sunday: Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; Lk 1:46-50, 53-54; Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Necessity is the plea for every infringement on human rights. It is the argument of tyrants.

—William Pitt the Younger



### Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated!

For the month of **December** offerings:

PLEASE mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website [www.stphilipstteresa.org](http://www.stphilipstteresa.org) via Paypal or card. *Include your offering envelope # with your donation.*

[for late Nov.] **1<sup>st</sup> Collections: \$4262. Add Op: \$677.**

**Cap Exp: \$752. Rural Food: \$3532.**

12/6: *Retiremt Fund for Religious.* 12/8: *Immac. Concep.* 12/13: *Op. Expenses.*

### Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

**Parish Council [PC]:** TBA Zoom

**Finance Council [FC]:** TBA Zoom

**Liturgy Committee:** TBA Zoom

**St. Teresa Ladies Guild:** Contact Diane, 823-6044

**St. Philip Ladies Guild:** Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

**Centering Prayer ZOOM:** Tues. noon/Fri. 930am - info [www.stphilipstteresa.org](http://www.stphilipstteresa.org)

**Coffee & Goodies:** cancelled for now

**Mondays & Wednesdays-Seniors Lunch at 12noon:** cancelled for now

**Qi Gong Tai Chi [Thurs.] & AA [Fri.]:** cancelled for now

### ✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

12/06 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

12/06 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Marcella & Joseph Kiefer

12/13 Sun. 8am Mass for the People

12/13 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Peggy Glenn

### Prayer Requests: Leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Mary K., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Jacque W., Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Papke family., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James, Dennis M., Art H., Lynn, Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N.

### SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Monday: St. Ambrose  
 Tuesday: The Immaculate Conception of the BVM  
 Wednesday: St. Juan Diego  
 Thursday: International Human Rights Day  
 Friday: St. Damasus I  
 Saturday: Our Lady of Guadalupe

### PARISH MEMO

**November--** The times and locations of our outdoor Sunday Masses:

**St. Philip's, 8:00am** in the parking lot fronting St. Philip's church;

**St. Teresa's, 9:30am** on the steps of St. Teresa's church.

*[Note: Rain or extreme weather cancels Masses for the day.]*

The 9:30am Mass is also being live broadcast using Zoom. See below for login information.

**Please mute your microphone and turn off video when joining.**

The Zoom will begin at 9:15 with Mass at 9:30. Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85354104721?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85354104721?pwd=SHVsbEpnL3gvWHJ4NGZNdWlSRWdtZz09)

[pwd=SHVsbEpnL3gvWHJ4NGZNdWlSRWdtZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85354104721?pwd=SHVsbEpnL3gvWHJ4NGZNdWlSRWdtZz09)

Meeting ID: 853 5410 4721 Passcode: 054786

As of 11/20: **Ella's Centering Prayer group by Zoom** will be at the usual time (Fridays 9:30-10:30a.m.) and also on Tuesdays at 12noon.

It will always be this same link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/221895142?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/221895142?pwd=SnROcjF3My95NC9Qc3hV51VUZzIjZz09)

[pwd=SnROcjF3My95NC9Qc3hV51VUZzIjZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/221895142?pwd=SnROcjF3My95NC9Qc3hV51VUZzIjZz09)



Jesus is at the home of two sisters. Martha is busy with the serving, while Mary sits at Jesus' feet to listen to him. When Martha complains, Jesus says to her that she is too worried about many things and that Mary has chosen the better part. Perhaps this is not the best analogy for pastoral work, per se, but I am reminded of it because of the tension between "doing" and "being". Jesus says that the better part is the listening, but he never says that the serving is not necessary. I have always understood this story to show that both are necessary. We just need to not be anxious and worried, and when Jesus is present, we must let Him be present and allow Him to touch us. If we are too busy and worried about all the things that we must do, then we are not allowing Him to be present to us. And as deacons or pastoral workers, we must always be aware that unless Jesus is present, our work is useless. If I am too busy "doing" and solving problems and not letting Jesus in to help, then I am probably not helping. I am sure that the emphasis during our diaconal formation on "listening" and "being present" and not in "doing" has to do with the fact that, in the face of the work deacons do and the suffering they see, it is easy for deacons to forget that we are not the ones who fix anything: **God alone is God.**

This does not mean that all we can do is pray with and read Scriptures to those to whom we minister. On the contrary, being present means letting those to whom we minister set the agenda and letting Christ enter. But it doesn't mean that we mustn't do anything else. Let's be clear: We must pray, but maybe not necessarily in the presence of the one to whom we minister (although that is good, too). I'll always remember what Deacon Gary Johnson told me once: *"The most important prayer of a deacon is the one he says before he enters the hospital room."*

I see this very clearly when I get together with friends and relatives over the holidays. We have the full spectrum between belief and skepticism. There are some who are religious and others who merely call themselves "spiritual". There are the apathetic and the so-called agnostics - but the issue of religion always seems to come up during Christmas. I wonder how different our Christmas gatherings will be this year. What woes and complaints will be heard around the Christmas dinner table?

### Maybe for some there will be no Christmas dinner.

In the midst of all that, we are called to be the presence of Christ. There may be differences in spiritual beliefs, but at the core of everyone's questions, complaints, and even attacks, is the "voice of illness", the voice of brokenness and suffering. We must listen and be present to them.

Next Sunday, the Second Sunday in Advent, we will hear the prophet Isaiah telling us to *"Comfort, give comfort to my people"* (Isaiah 40:1). How do we give comfort? Do we tell the person that is suffering that "everything will be OK", or do we sit with them in silence, listening, holding their hand and acknowledging their pain? Do we

try to fix their problems, or do we try to be present to them? Also next Sunday, the Apostle Peter will tell us that for God one day is like a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8-14). When we comfort others, we also have to remember that God does not see as we see. We may be thinking in linear, temporal, physical ways; God sees in the eternal. It is likely that our little solution to this problem is not God's solution.

### Let God enter and be present.

The question then is: How can we be the presence of Christ to the one who is crying out, "Where is God?" Is it only by listening and being present? Come back next week as we continue our reflection.



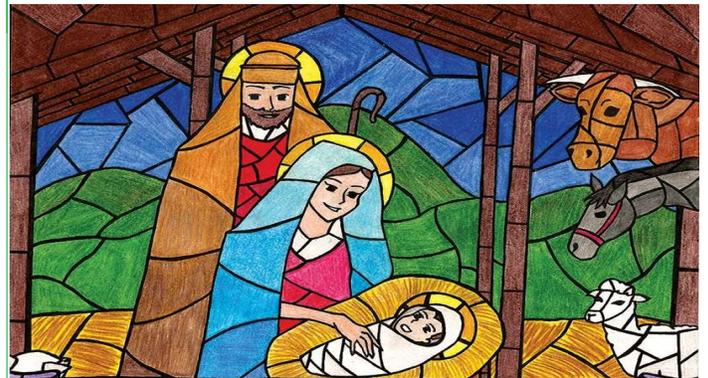
*Every week, Deacon Pedro takes a particular topic apart, not so much to explore or explain the subject to its fullness, but rather to provide insights that will deepen our understanding of the subject. And don't worry, at the end of the day he always puts the pieces back together. There are no limits to deconstructing: Write to him and ask any*

*questions about the faith or Church teaching: [pedro@saltandlighttv.org](mailto:pedro@saltandlighttv.org)*

## Wanted: Christmas artists

The Catholic Register's popular children's drawing contest is back!

The Catholic Register is conducting its 10th annual children's Christmas drawing contest. The top entry in each of 3 categories will receive a \$75 Amazon gift certificate, plus a 6 month subscription to our digital edition. The winning drawings will appear in *The Register's* Christmas edition, December 20, 2020; and also appear on *The Register's* [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#) pages.



**Rules::** The contest is open to children enrolled in Grades 1-8.

- One prize will be awarded to the top entry in each of these categories: Grades 7-8, Grades 4-6, and Grades 1-3.
- Entries must be original, in color, drawn or painted on a page 8.5" x 11" or larger, and illustrate some aspect of the birth of Jesus at the first Christmas in Bethlehem.
- For electronic submissions: minimum resolution 300dpi, in JPEG or PDF format.
- A completed entry form is required for every entry. All entries must include the signature authorization of a parent or guardian. Entries become the property of *The Catholic Register*.
- Electronic submissions can be sent to [contest@catholicregister.org](mailto:contest@catholicregister.org). (Email entries must include: Child's Name, Address, Phone number, Grade, Age, and parent/guardian authorization.)
- Judges' decisions are final and entries may be published in *The Catholic Register* at the editor's sole discretion. **Submission deadline is 9am PST on Friday, December 11, 2020.**

Entry form can be [downloaded here](#). Please fill out the form and send it with your submission by email attachment to [contest@catholicregister.org](mailto:contest@catholicregister.org)  
Please send entries before the Dec. 11 deadline to be in the contest on time.