

**First Sunday of Advent
November 28, 2021**

**I will raise up for David
a just shoot;
he shall do what is right
and just in the land.**

— *Jeremiah 33:15*

WATCHFUL CONFIDENCE

We the Church enter into Advent and the new liturgical year with a call for a watchful confidence. Our readings were originally addressed to communities undergoing great loss and confusion. Jeremiah speaks confidently of God fulfilling the ancient promises to Israel, even during a time of foreign invasion. Paul speaks of God leading the Church into holiness, while the community longs for the coming of Jesus. In the Gospel passage from Luke, Jesus speaks of powerful signs and of great confusion to come, but emphasizes that we may look forward knowing that God brings not cause for despair, but hope. We celebrate Advent to remind each other of God's faithfulness. We are to be watchful, to see how God is stirring up our world. God disturbs both our pride and our complacency, and brings us healing and justice. We prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus, confident that God indeed fulfills all these divine promises..

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PRAYER OF THE WEEK

First Sunday of Advent

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

What righteous deeds would I be able to bring with me if Christ returned this week?

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-9; Mt 8:5-11
Tuesday: Rom 10:9-18; Ps 19:8-11; Mt 4:18-22
Wednesday: Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 15:29-37
Thursday: Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a; Mt 7:21, 24-27
Friday: Is 29:17-24; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Mt 9:27-31
Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-6; Mt 9:35 — 10:1, 5a, 6-8
Sunday: Bar 5:1-9; Ps 126:1-6; Phil 1:4-6, 8-11; Lk 3:1-6

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: First Sunday of Advent
Tuesday: [St. Andrew, Apostle](#) >
Friday: St. Francis Xavier
Friday: St. John Damascene; First Friday
Saturday: First Saturday



Our Current Parish Mass Schedule:

St. Philip, *Occidental*: 8am & 11:15am Sun.; 9am Wed. & Fri.
St. Teresa, *Bodega*: 5pm Sat.; 9:30am Sun.; 9am Tues. & Thurs.
Note: Please wear a mask in church. Thank you.

Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **October** offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection box or mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one] with your donation. Bless you!



11/21: summary provided soon.

11/28: Rural Food. 12/5: no 2nd collection. 12/8: Immaculate Conception.

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
Finance Council [FC]: TBA
Liturgy Committee [LC]: TBA
St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044
St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

11/27 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Charlotte Reaves Griffith
11/28 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Tina Bartolo
11/28 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Gonzalo Coello
11/28 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People
11/30 Tues. 9am Mass ✠ Valarie & Nick Buzelec
12/1 Wed. 9am Mass ✠ Ermindo & Mariane Argentieri
12/2 Thurs. 9am Mass ✠ Howard & Clara Roth
12/2 Thurs. 11am ✠ Funeral Mass for Johnny Gonnella, St. Philip's
12/3 Fri. 9am Mass ✠ Greg Doyle
12/4 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Bill Cummings
12/5 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Denis & Josephine Poynter
12/5 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Lodavico & Sabina Del Curto/Del Curto family
12/5 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People

Prayer Requests: Please 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., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorri K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Chuck, Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James G., Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Samantha S., Gary E.

[Mission Santa Cruz \(link\)](#)



(the California missions are featured in our current bulletins)

Parish memo: The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available on Tues. (12/14) and Wed. (12/15), at church after the 9am Mass (for about an hour or so, starting at 9:30am).

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for November 2021

Heavy rain and wind did not deter our dedicated volunteers from providing bags and bags of proteins, cheeses, fresh milk, eggs and warm socks at this month's Rural Food distribution. On Tuesday, November 9, 54 families (138 individuals) received nutritional support during our distribution at the St Philips Parking lot and parish hall. Star Child sign-ups were completed for our traditional December distribution of toys, clothes or gift certificates for children in the parish. In December, we will continue our tradition of providing each family with enough blankets, scarves or hats for each member of the family.

If you are aware of a family which needs nutritional assistance, please let them know about our program. Leave a message at the parish office, (707) 408-2650 to get a call back with additional information.

This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, awesome volunteers. **Thank you for your generous donations as we strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.**

RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in the Parish Hall and parking area: Saturday, December 11, 9-10:00am repackaging; Monday, December 13, 9:00 – 11:00am set up and Tuesday, December 14, 7:30 – 11:00am to distribute food to clients.



Prince Albert travels to Dubai without Princess Charlene - Queen Rania drives the Duchess of Cornwall around Jordan - Princess Catharine-Amalia tries on a tiara inside Queen Maxima's wardrobe.

A student of mine had an interesting hobby. He kept tabs on all the royal families of Europe. Usually we only hear about Great Britain's royals – but many a dynasty is multiplied all over Europe, inbred heirs to some of the great kings and queens of history. And news of their doings is available in little known periodicals. Of course none of these royals rule kingdoms any more; they are more like heirlooms to remind us of the days of real pomp and circumstance.

So why in 1926 did the Church institute this feast of Christ the King? I suppose because by the end of the First World

War monarchs were toppling everywhere and states were becoming purely secular – devoid of the past trappings of absolute monarchs – giving way to parliaments of commoners. And the Church in its apparel and monumental appearance may have felt, among reasons theological, some need to conserve that past as being its own past as well.

The very word Christ means royal as far back as the Gospel and Hebrew Bible. In Hebrew it means the Anointed One. If you read the *Books of Samuel and Kings* in the Old Testament you will be immersed in the politics of those times. Israel had been a loose confederation of twelve tribes, decentralized and disorganized, under pressures from surrounding kingdoms. So a movement began to call for centralization around a single leader – a king – to control Israel's destiny.

Samuel was against it for all the reasons people oppose big government today. As he expresses it in 1st Samuel 8: *The governance of the king who will rule you will be as follows: He will take your sons and assign them to his chariots and horses, and they will run before his chariot. He will appoint from among them his commanders of thousands and of hundreds. He will make them do his plowing and harvesting and produce his weapons of war and chariotry. He will use your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his servants . . . He will tithe your crops and grape harvests. . . also tithe your flocks . . . you will become his slaves.* Sound familiar? Nevertheless Israel chose monarchy – Saul, David, Solomon and eventually Civil War . . . and the downfall of their kingdom and dispersal of their people – yet they longed for its return

Which again raises the question – why apply the title of King or Christ (the Anointed) to Jesus or produce images of him enthroned – who had no place to lay his head, who walked among the marginal people of his day, saying: blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, blessed are the gentle, the merciful, the uncontaminated of heart, the persecuted. Pilate raised the question: You are a king then? Jesus replies: That's what they say but this is why I am here: to witness to the truth, to un-conceal things forgotten, to which the world is blinded by the news of the day - - who also redirected our eyes to the "royalty" of creation itself all around us when he said: Learn from the way of the wild flowers . . . not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of them.

--Geoff Wood, 11/21/2021

THE THREE COMINGS OF ADVENT

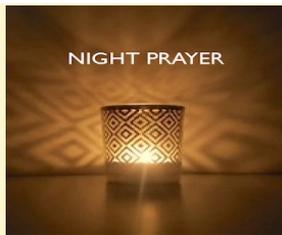
There are three distinct comings of the Lord of which I know, His coming to humankind, His coming into humankind, and His coming against humankind.

—St. Bernard: *Third Sermon for Advent*

GREATNESS

The measure of greatness is not the number of servants you have, but the number of people you serve.

—Anonymous



Concord Pastor

This Night Prayer offering began 16 months ago with the pandemic lockdown and is now a daily feature on my blog. At the outset, Night Prayer was specifically themed for the evening but has, over the months, become a more general prayer, always ending with a "nighttime" verse. Today I'm offering a slightly revised version of the first Night

Prayer which I'll also post on the sidebar for easy access on any evening. From blog of Concord Pastor

Night and day you watch over me, Lord:
with your strong arm and your gentle touch
you hold me and care for me as your child,
your own, your beloved...

Make me grateful for the day I've had, Lord,
with all its ups and downs, its joys and sorrows,
and forgive the ways I may have failed
to be helpful, loving and honest...

Help me fall asleep, Lord,
trusting I'll find you at the foot of my bed,
when dawn's light comes to wake me...

Bless my night with good rest, Lord,
and fill my dreams with peace...

Comfort those who are restless tonight,
worried and afraid for themselves
and for the ones they love and care for...

Stand guard with all who serve and protect us,
at home and abroad,
and especially those in harm's way this night...

Be with those who staff our hospitals,
our nursing homes and care facilities
and comfort the elderly, the sick and the dying,
all who are in their care...

And tonight, Lord, I pray especially for...
*(Here, name the people and the intentions
especially in your heart tonight)*

As a mother tucks her child in bed at night, Lord,
tuck in all of us, around the world,
warm and snug 'neath a blanket of your love...

Give me good rest so I'll rise in the morning
refreshed and ready to live a new day
by the truth of your word, in your peace and love...

Protect us, Lord, while we're awake
and watch over us as we sleep
that awake, we might keep watch with you
and asleep, rest in your peace...Amen.

[Loss. Strength. Hope.](#) ([Link to jpmcginty wordpress](#))

This is a brief retreat, first time ever at Holy Cross Monastery on the Hudson. A beautiful spot. And real peace.

I've been reading words I wrote or quoted from others while I was on retreat, back in the spring of 1998. Some of those words belong to the inimitable Henri Nouwen, of blessed memory. This evening I saw again words I copied out of his book on consolation, written after the death of his mother.

I suppose I should have expected what came this evening. This is my first moment of retreat since Mom's death last December. Sitting in the monastery church tonight in the minutes before Compline, waves of grief rose up, and many tears. I miss her so much, all the time. Life goes on, to use the phrase she always used, but it's not ever the same. Evenings are hard, every day. Just at the end of the day. I just want to see her, to hold her hand, to hear her voice again, to kiss her goodnight. All once simple everyday things. Now all of them, impossible.

The other day, before retreat, I found myself thinking of both my parents in their last days. The stories of their going-forth differ. Dad had five weeks of weakness, illness, treatment after his diagnosis with cancer. Mom had an extended period of weakening, an a-symptomatic experience of Covid, and a second positive test just days before her death.

Neither of them complained. Neither ever asked anything resembling, why me, why now. Neither of them spoke negative words. Both seemed to accept the gateway coming near. I remember Dad standing in his hospital room before the mirror, his eyes catching mine as he said of his 72 years, "It's been a good run," and repeating the words again. I remember Mom, the afternoon before she died, there with the intake nurse from hospice. Mom lay in bed at 91 years, listened as best she could, responded, and smiled. She smiled gently at this new friend, and at me.

From both of my parents came the same very last words I ever heard them speak in this world. They said, "Thank you." After all the joy, all the struggle, all the sorrow, all the laughter, it came down to gratitude, to thankfulness. It came down to saying yes to life and to the hope for new life. And the other day, remembering, I thought and prayed: Lord, grant me a share in their strength. Just a portion.

They are forever my heroes.

Henri Nouwen, so many years after his own death, speaks to me tonight in my own handwriting from 1998, these words he wrote in contending with death as his own mother went forth from this world:

Our lives can indeed be seen as a process of becoming familiar with death, as a school in the art of dying. ... When we see life constantly relativized by death, we can enjoy it for what it is: a free gift.

Mother's death is indeed an invitation to surrender ourselves more freely to the future, in the conviction that one of the most important parts of our lives may still be ahead of us and that mother's life and death were meant to make this possible.

Yes, a silent, joyful waiting. No panic, no despair, no screams, no tears or wringing of hands. No shouts of joy either. No victorious songs, no banners or flags. Only a simple quiet waiting with the deep, inner knowledge that all will be well. How? Do not ask. Why? Do not worry. Where? You will know. When? Just wait. Just wait quietly, peacefully, joyfully ... all will be well.

[H. Nouwen, *A Letter of Consolation*]

And so, I wait.

