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 PETITION & THANKSGIVING LETTERS
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ADVENT, MEANS WAITING. BUT WHO ARE WE WAITING FOR?

An angel informs Joseph that Mary's son's name shall be called Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins, as recorded in today's gospel from Matthew. And the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah that the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel which means "God is with us".

Advent means waiting. But who are we waiting for? Jesus was born more than two thousand years ago. The Prophets of old knew who they were waiting for, the Messiah, the Anointed One that was to come to free their people from oppression, sin and death. John the Baptist knew who he was waiting for. One who is more powerful than he is and he is not worthy to carry his sandals. And he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The shopping centers know who they are waiting for. They are waiting for shoppers so that their cash registers will jingle merrily with money. People around the world rush to these shopping centers to do their Christmas shopping all in good Christmas cheer. And many do it online today. All these things are good, for Christmas is a season of peace and joy.

As we enjoy celebrating Christmas with food and drink and wish each other Merry Christmas, a thought runs through my mind, whose birthday is it anyway? Yes, we do not know the exact date and day of Jesus' birthday but tradition has named the 25th December as the date, it was a pagan festival of the sun god. Once the winter solstice occurs in the northern hemisphere in later December, we gain seconds of sunlight each day. The days of sunlight become longer. Jesus who is the light of the world will begin to shine through the darkness, free people from oppression and will conquer sin and death.

As we do our shopping for Christmas don't you think we should also be "Shopping for Jesus" as it is really his birthday. So then, who are we waiting for? I would suggest that we are waiting to bring a living, compassionate and merciful Jesus to life in our own living. So as we 'shop' for Jesus, we bring love, peace and justice into our lives and the lives of others, bearing in mind the less fortunate. There's no other present Jesus would want more, I would imagine.

Wishing you a joyful and Holy Christmas.

Reflection by Glenn de Cruz, CSSR

Novena notes



4th Sunday of Advent
 Year A
 22 December 2019

Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 22 December	Is 7:10-14; Rom 1:1-7; Mt 1:18-24 Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.
Mon, 23 December	Mal 3:1-4,23-24; Lk 1:57-66 Stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.
Tue, 24 December	2 Sam 7:1-5,8-12,14-16; Lk 1:67-79 I will sing forever of your love, O Lord.
Wed, 25 December The Nativity of the Lord	Is 52:7-10; Hebr 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Thu, 26 December St. Stephen	Ac 6:8-10;7:54-59; Mt 10:17-22 Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
Fri, 27 December St. John	1 Jn 1:1-4; Jn 20:2-8 Rejoice, you just, in the Lord.
Sat, 28 December Holy Innocents	1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Mt 2:13-18 Our life, like a bird, has escaped from the snare of the fowler.

WEEKDAY MASS (MON - FRI)
 Time: 6.30am, 12.15pm, 6.30pm
 Confession: Half an hour before all Masses except the morning Mass

SUNSET MASS (SAT)
 Time: 6.30pm

Time: 8am, 10am, 12noon*, 5.30pm
 *2nd & 4th Sunday - Mass in Tagalog, subject to the availability of priests.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY
 Time: 8am, 6.30pm

SATURDAY MORNING MASS
 Time: 7am

SATURDAY NOVENA DEVOTION
 English: 8am, 9.30am, 11am, 1pm, 4pm, 5.30pm
 Mandarin: 2.30pm
 Confession: After every Novena Service except after the 11am service.

DAYS OF OBLIGATION
 Time: 7pm (Eve of Day of Obligation)
 6.30am, 12.15pm, 7pm

Novena notes

4th Sunday of Advent

Today the Church celebrates the Fourth Sunday of Advent. We light the last candle on our Advent wreath and our preparation for Christmas is almost finished. We also reach the culmination of the "O Antiphons." In previous antiphons our cry was directed to the Messiah as He manifested Himself to the Chosen People, to the Gentiles, and in nature; now He is addressed in person and asked to remain with us as Emmanuel.

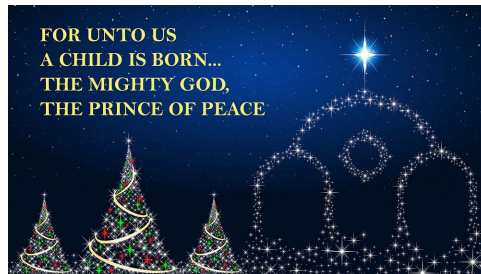
Reading this final antiphon gives the feeling that a climax has indeed come. The very name Emmanuel, "God with us" reveals the kindly, human heart of Jesus — He wants to be one of us with all our human weakness and suffering. He wants to experience how hard it is to be human. He wants to remain with us to the end of time. He wants to dwell within us. He wants to make us share His nature.

In today's Gospel, Elizabeth says to Mary, "Who am I that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" She tells how the baby (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb as she became filled with the Holy Spirit. Finally, Mary remains three months with her kinswoman before returning to her home. This Sunday, so close to Christmas, the Church invites us to focus our attention on Mary, who receives the child, Jesus, in her womb. As we say in the Litany of the Blessed Virgin: "Ark of the Covenant, pray for us."

Advent Novena

We are in the last week of the Advent Novena and this year theme is, "The Birth of Jesus". All are welcome. Bring along your family and friends.

21 Dec: Jesus - The King



The Redemptorist Community wishes all of you "A Blessed Christmas & a Spirit-filled New Year!"

Operating hours of Church Reception

Please take note of the operating hours for the Reception on the following days :

24th December 2019 : 9am to 1pm
25th December 2019 : Closed

31st December 2019 : 9am to 1pm
1st January 2020 : Closed

"DAWN Skill Development Programme for foreign domestic workers"

Courses on Baking, Cooking and Cake Decoration (Basic & Advance), Sewing and Handicraft from January 2020 till June 2020.

The 1st Batch 2020 Care-Giving Course is scheduled to begin on Sunday, 29th March. Classes will be conducted on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month.

Registration is open

Dates : Sundays in December 2019

Time : 10 am to 2 pm

Venue : DAWN,
Good Shepherd Place,
9, Lorong 8, Toa Payoh,
Singapore 319253.

Contact: 96702880 (Suzeth),
82694546 (Rowena), or
82333728 (Sr. Barbara)

Family Healing Service

There will be a Family Healing Service on 3rd January 2020. It will be at 8pm in Novena Church. All are welcome.

Christmas & New Year Mass Times

Christmas Vigil - 24th December
Carolling - 8pm
Mass - 9pm and 12midnight

Christmas Day - 25th December
Mass as usual at 8am, 10am, 12noon and 5.30pm

New Year's Eve - 31st December
Rosary at 10pm.
Mass at 10.30pm
(New Year Party / Launch of 70th Anniversary Celebrations at 11.30pm)

New Year's Day - 1st January 2020
Mass as usual at 8am & 6.30pm

Please take note that there will be **No** lunch-time Mass 1st January 2020 being public holiday.

Operating hours of St. Alphonsus Bookroom

Please take note of the operating hours for the bookroom on the following days :

24th December 2019 : 11am to 3pm
25th December 2019 : Closed

31st December 2019 : 11am to 3pm
1st January 2020 : Closed