

1st Week of Advent

*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!'" (Mark 13:35-37)

Reflection:

It is the first week of Advent. Ready or not, the time of preparation has begun. The Gospel of Mark on the first Sunday of Advent sets the tone for our pilgrimage: Watch! We have been busy about God's work in the vineyard; we dutifully care for our own, and our families' affairs; we make lists and check them twice... but God's message to us as we begin this season is to make time to keep watch with Holy Mother Church and to listen in silence as our hearts cry out once more, "O come, O come, Emmanuel!"

Prayer:

"Heavenly Father, we offer you our hearts that cry out for our Savior. We ask your Holy Spirit to guide us through this pilgrimage of the season of Advent, just like you guided the Holy Family to Bethlehem. May we keep watch with Mary and Joseph, and prepare to welcome Our Lord Jesus Christ on Christmas day. Amen."

2nd Week of Advent

*“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*

*Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God.’*

Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word.’

Then the angel departed from her.”

(Luke 1:35-38)

Dec 12th is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas. In this week’s Gospel, Mary is greeted by the angel Gabriel. She is sent a messenger, and then she too takes the task in appearing to St. Juan Diego centuries after. “May it be done to me according to your word,” is the acceptance of faith. This is the fiat of Mary- the yes. We, too, are called to this obedience of faith, and although the task of responding yes to the call of God is no easy feat, we are promised that nothing is impossible for God. He provides us the grace to withstand the challenges. It is by Mary’s yes, that the Savior of the World came, and it is by our yeses, that we can bring others to know him.

“O God, who, fulfilling the promise made to our Fathers, chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to become the Mother of the Savior, grant that we may follow her example, for her humility was pleasing to you and her obedience profitable to us. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.”

3rd Week of Advent

*My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked upon his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
(Luke 1:46-48)*

“Rejoice!”

Mary’s prayer echoes the psalms of praise that would have been so familiar in Jewish households, and also the prayer of praise and joy of Hannah, at the arrival of her son Samuel, who would be the one to anoint the King, David. This joy has its foundations in recognition and gratitude for the work of God in their lives. Especially now, as we look forward to the coming of Jesus, with the Blessed Mother, we delight in the Father’s love in sending His Son to us, and in our salvation.

“Most Blessed Mother help us to make your prayer truly our own, to help us recognize and rejoice in the gift of Jesus, and to delight in God’s work in our lives, and in the lives of those we serve in catechetical ministry. Amen.”

4th Week of Advent

*He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:32-33)*

The word forever in this passage reminds us that Advent encourages the faithful to focus on eternity. The Incarnation of Jesus changed everything. From now on there will ultimately be only one King, one Lord, one faith and one eternal destiny for all who embrace God's gift of salvation from sin and death. Although our Advent waiting will soon end, there will be no end to the joy and beauty of heaven.

“Jesus, we adore you. We thank you for coming to us in your Incarnation, your birth and your proclamation of God's kingdom—an eternal kingdom of repentance and reconciliation. Please bless our efforts at catechetical leadership. Help us invite and encourage others to see you and welcome you in to hearts and homes throughout Indiana. May we be reminded that you are with us always, until the end of the age, when very soon we sing ‘O Come Let Us Adore Him.’ Amen.”