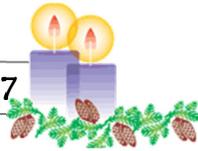


December 10, 2017



FROM THE
PASTOR

ADVENT HAS ONLY THREE FULL WEEKS THIS YEAR. Christmas Eve's being on a Sunday means that the fourth week is only a short few hours. Israel, as known as Zion, Jerusalem, is in captivity, far from their holy temple, far from feeling any "comfort" or any sense of being carried or cared-for. We hear the Prophet shouting to the alienated, what he himself has heard. Our whole 1st reading contains promises and hopeful images of just what God is going to do.

All our Advent Readings and liturgies can be interpreted as a series of divine finger-pointing and demanding for the work of straightening our roads, filling in our valleys, leveling our mountains and then the Shepherd will be pleased and will return us. Advent is our prayer-time to get closer to God; this closeness is where the Spiritual Life is lived that is *recovery*. Therefore, Advent is the season to allow ourselves time for God's recovery of ourselves.

Today's Gospel contains the opening dramatic presentation, that all the verses of this Gospel are "Good News" of Jesus the Son of God. The first scene in the playing-out of this Good News is John the Baptist's fulfilling the prophecy we hear in our 1st reading. John clarifies so early in his preaching and baptizing that he is not the Son of God but points out to Jesus as the mightier-One Who will be the Giver of a new baptism in the Spirit. This Spirit will continue the reconstruction of our creation and will aid the recovery of our selves.

May we pray for God's guidance to receive the incarnate Son with gladness that the Joy, Peace of the season will remain with us all through!

Fr. Michael



IT'S THIS COMING SATURDAY!

The **SVDP** 2017 Christmas Food Box Distribution

~ December 16th ~

UPCOMING RETREATS:

ASH WEDNESDAY RETREAT — Offered at ***Our Lady of Peace Retreat House*** (Beaverton, OR), on Wednesday, **February 14, 9:00am—2:30pm**, with Retreat Master Rev. Vincent Kelber, O.P. Includes Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and quiet reflection time. Suggested donation is \$40/person (lunch included).

For info: sisters@olpretreat.org or 503-649-7127.

RETRouvaille — **FIND A NEW BEGINNING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE** by attending a Retrouvaille retreat Do you feel alone? Frustrated or angry? Arguing or just not talking to each other? There is hope! For confidential information or to register for the **January 19-21 (2018)**. 1 weekend, go to: www.helpourmarriage.org or call 1-503-225-9191.

~ AREA NEWS ~

DID YOU KNOW? That our local Vicariate (Eugene area churches) now has a website? Check it out, to find out more about what is going on in our Vicariate and area churches, at: <http://catcommlc.wixsite.com/ccolc> (and our St. Peter website also has a link to it in the “Beyond St. Peter” tab!)

EUGENE’S OWN YOUNG ADULT group (ages 21-39, married or single) meets on Thursday evenings, **6:45pm**, at St. Mary Church (in the St. Matthew classroom—Par. Ctr.). For inquiries: eugeneyoungadults@gmail.com or 541-270-9329 or [facebook.com/EugeneCYA](https://www.facebook.com/EugeneCYA).

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS — Regular Court meeting on **December 14** (Thursday) ... Mass at 12:15pm, followed by potluck/meeting at 1:00pm; bring a dish to share. For info: Julia Kelso at 541-344-6851, or www.cdacourtregion118.com.

CATHOLIC MOMS & GRANDMOMS! — Ever wonder how to connect with other Catholic mothers & grandmothers in our area? Looking for a dynamic and friendly community of women who are seeking to grow in faith, while building up our community? Eugene Catholic Moms group is now meeting on **Tuesdays, 10am**. All are welcome to join in building friendships between moms, children, and grandmoms in a fun and relaxed environment. **Questions?** [website](http://www.eugenecatholicmoms.com) (eugenecatholicmoms.com) or call Melita Sikes (541-206-9128).

FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

THE CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS ...

To indicate that he was consecrated to God for a special work, Samson never cut his hair (Jgs 13:2-5; 16:17). In similar ways, other men and women in Scripture set themselves apart for God by taking vows, wearing distinctive clothing, eating a distinctive diet, or living alone in the wilderness. The ancient Nazirites, for example, took vows and promised not to cut their hair, come near a human corpse, or consume alcohol (Nm 6:1-21).

In the early centuries of the Church many men and women sought to give themselves completely to God, and practiced similar strict spiritual disciplines like fasting, prayer, and vigils, while remaining part of their local assemblies. Their consecrated lives, in some ways, resembled that of Anna, the prophetess who was present when Jesus was presented at the temple (Lk 2:36-38).

In time, however, many of these dedicated believers began moving out to the wilderness to devote their lives exclusively to prayer, penance, and works of charity. They took vows to: remain single as St. Paul advised (1 Cor 7:32-34), to live in voluntary poverty as Jesus had counseled those who wished to become “perfect” (Mt 19:21), and to obey the spiritual fathers and mothers who helped them become holy (Heb 13:17). This sacrificial way of life helped to focus and purify them.

These “ascetics”, as they were called (biblical Greek word for ‘discipline’), looked to several scriptural figures as their inspiration and models, in particular: Elijah the prophet (1 Kgs 17:1-9), John the Baptist and his disciples (Mt 3:1-4; 9:14-15), and our Lord, himself, who had spent forty days alone in the wilderness to pray, fast, and do battle with the devil (Lk 4:1-13). Over the following centuries, most of these Christians organized into religious orders, and formed like-minded communities with a common life of prayer and discipline. New groups emerged, each with its own “charism”, or special gift.

Today, a wide variety of Catholic orders serve the Church and world. Some are cloistered — dedicated exclusively to prayer, meditation, and manual labor. Others give themselves to works of charity, such as healthcare or social work. Still others specialize in evangelization, teaching, or communications media. Whatever their specific gifts, all share a vocation from God to serve as men & women set apart for a special task.

RECOMMENDED READING: Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible

1 Kgs 19:1-18 · Mt 4:1-2 · Mk 1:2-6, 12-13 · Lk 5:33-35 · Acts 21:23-24 · 1 Tm 6:17-19 · Heb 11:37-38 · Rv 14:4 · & Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 914-933 · 944-945 · 1672 ·