



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

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DECEMBER 2009

ADVENT BLESSINGS FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP!

In November, 1966, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, having just experienced the call for liturgical renewal at the Second Vatican Council, issued a “Pastoral Statement on Penitence and Abstinence” with a particular focus on Advent and Lent. In 2009, as the Church begins the new liturgical year with the season of Advent and anticipates the publication and implementation of the revised *Missale Romanum*, I’d like to share with you some of the wisdom, values and ideas that we have inherited. As you plan for your Advent celebrations, I encourage you to share these words with others and spend time meditating on this pastoral statement that extends to us an invitation to refocus our attention.



Changing customs, especially in connection with preparation for Christmas, have diminished popular appreciation of the Advent season. Something of a holiday mood of Christmas appears now to be anticipated in the days of the Advent season. As a result, this season has unfortunately lost in great measure the role of penitential preparation for Christmas that it once had.

Zealous Christians have striven to keep alive or to restore the spirit of Advent by resisting the trend away from the disciplines and austerities that once characterized the season among us. Perhaps their devout purpose will be better accomplished, and the point of Advent will be better fostered if we rely ... on the liturgy to restore its deeper understanding as a season of effective preparation for the mystery of the Nativity.

For these reasons, we... call upon Catholics to make the Advent season ... a time of meditation on the lessons taught by the liturgy and of increased participation in the liturgical rites by which the Advent mysteries are exemplified and their sanctifying effect is accomplished.

If in all Christian homes, churches, schools, retreats and other religious houses, liturgical observances are practiced with fresh fervor and fidelity to the penitential spirit of the liturgy, then Advent will again come into its own. Its spiritual purpose will again be clearly perceived.



A rich literature concerning family and community liturgical observances appropriate to Advent has fortunately developed in recent years. We urge instruction based upon it, counting on the liturgical renewal of ourselves and our people to provide for our spiritual obligations with respect to this season.

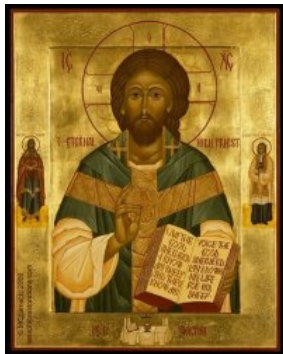
The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has created a Website (www.usccb.org/advent/) with suggestions for daily prayer, reading, reflection and action throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. **Also included with this monthly mailing are two Advent Penance Services for use in your parish's communal celebration.** All of this information is also available at the Office of Worship website at www.officeofworship.catholicweb.com.

THIRD EDITION, ROMAN MISSAL – The USCCB Committee on Divine Worship continues to update their website which is dedicated entirely to information and progress on the revised edition of the *Roman Missal*. This website is attractive and user-friendly and is created for both the priest and lay faithful. Please invite your parishioners to visit the website at www.usccb.org/romanmissal/about for questions they may have about changes in the Liturgy.

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE MYSTAGOGY – **Time is running out to register** for this exciting workshop, “Creating an Effective Mystagogy” by Rev. Dennis Chriszt, CPPS. He is the author of the book, *The 50 Days of Joy: Easter Season Reflections for New Catholics*. Franklin Park IL: World Library Publications, 2006. ISBN: 978-1-58459-292-1.

- Sunday, 24 January 2010
- King's House Retreat Center, 700 N. 66th Street, Belleville IL 62223
- \$35.00 per person
- Registration begins at 12:15 pm; workshop is 1:00-6:00 pm

Please see enclosed flyer for more information.



YEAR FOR PRIESTS – As we continue to move through the “Year for Priests” as declared by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, *please make use of the resources in this mailing to aid your parish's celebration.* Other resources are available on the website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Click here to find out more on how you can help celebrate this year-long event in your parish.

The “Year for Priests” is now on Facebook! Please invite your parishioners to become fans!

PLANNING AHEAD

DECEMBER 10: Since 1948, the United Nations have proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; thirty rights that all human beings need to live a decent life. This is also the anniversary of the death of Thomas Merton, monk.

DECEMBER 16: Los Posadas begin.

DECEMBER 17: The “O Antiphons” begin *O Come, O Come Emmanuel!*

CHRISTMAS OCTAVE: Renew and stress the importance of these eight days of Christmas (beside the entire package of twelve!). Remind parishioners of the importance of the feasts that are also celebrated in the octave and how these remembrances of Stephen, John, and the Holy Innocents predate our liturgical calendar formulation. In the U.S., the Massacre of Native Americans at Wounded Knee, South Dakota (1890) is remembered on December 29.

“WE HOLD THIS DAY
HOLY, NOT LIKE THE
PAGANS BECAUSE OF
THE BIRTH OF THE SUN,
BUT BECAUSE OF HIM
WHO MADE IT.”
— UNKNOWN
THEOLOGIAN, CA. 320
A.D.