



NOVEMBER 29 & 30, 2008 – FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – YEAR B

Issue Number 286

ADVENT FULL OF HISTORY AND TRADITION

Writing in *Before and After Christmas*, published by Augsburg Fortress, Debbie Trafton O'Neal tells us some of the history and traditions of Advent

The word *advent* means "coming." As Christians we know and celebrate this season of the church year as a time to prepare, reflect, and acknowledge our gift of salvation through God's Son, Jesus. In addition, during the Advent season Christians anticipate the promised second coming of Christ.

The season of Advent has evolved throughout history to the four weeks that we know today. Before the Christian church began, Jewish customs placed the new year in the (Northern) spring. During the first years of the Christian church, those who followed Jesus' teachings continued this tradition. Observances and traditions changed gradually throughout the years, and the celebration of Christ's birth was eventually tied to a midwinter celebration and the beginning of the new year. By the 4th or 5th century, Christmas was established as a religious festival that signified the church year had begun.

In the year A.D. 529, Emperor Justinian declared December 25 a civic holiday as well as a religious holiday. Then in A.D. 567, the Council of Tours established the period of Advent as a time of fasting before Christmas Day. Those who wished to join the Christian church were urged to fast for that period, preparing themselves mentally and physically.

Today the season of Advent is observed for four weeks, although when it was first established, the season was anywhere from three to seven weeks long. Some people think of the four Sundays during Advent as corresponding to

the four ways Jesus comes to us: "in the flesh" (at his birth); "in the mind" (when we acknowledge Jesus as our Saviour); "in death" (through Jesus' death, we receive eternal life); and "in majesty" (Jesus' coming at the end of time).

Others reflect on Jesus' birth and on his second coming, on John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ, and on Mary, Jesus' mother and God's obedient servant.

Advent is still observed as the beginning of the church year. The dates change from year to year, the first Sunday in Advent falling on the Sunday nearest November 30. Depending on which day Christmas Eve falls, the season can last from 23 to 28 days.

The use of colour has always played a significant part in the observation of church seasons. White was the colour used for the entire church year until the 12th century when other colours have been recorded as being used.

It is thought that the first Advent wreath originated in Germany or France within the traditions of the Lutheran church. Today the Advent wreath or its variations can be found in many cultures and ethnic communities because of the symbolic way it represents the weeks before Christmas.

The original wreath was most likely a circle of wire, with the circle representing the unending love of God. The evergreens used with the wreath represent the hope of eternal life that all of God's people share. The four candles used in the wreath represent not only the four weeks until Christmas Day, but also the thousands of years people waited for the Messiah to come. As each week's candle was lit, it represented the people's joy and anticipation of the light that came into the world at Jesus' birth.



Although there is no official tradition surrounding the lighting of the Advent wreath candles, different explanations have evolved through time. The most common themes centre on the birth and second coming of Christ with the lighting of the first and second candles, then on John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, with the lighting of the third candle, and on Mary, Jesus' mother and God's obedient servant, with the lighting of the last candle. When a fifth candle is added, it represents the true Light come into the world, and is often a much larger candle that will continue to be burned after Christmas Day and into Epiphany.



Today's Readings



First Reading Isaiah 63:16-17,64:1,3-8
The people of Israel have returned from exile in Babylon, but Jerusalem lies in ruins. Israel implores God to come again as Redeemer in a manifestation even greater than on Mount Sinai.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Ancient Corinth had risen from the ashes of destruction and had been rebuilt into an important centre of commerce, but it was also a place of corruption on a vast scale. Paul extols the Christian community for their witness and adherence to God whose faithfulness will sustain them to the end.

Gospel Mark 13:33-37 By means of a parable Jesus impresses upon his followers the need to be watchful and ready to meet God on the last day.

Next week: Second Sunday of Advent - Year B Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8.

Feast Day this Week
St Francis Xavier - Wed, Dec 3

HOLY HOUR WITH BENEDICTION this Thursday from 8.00 to 9.00pm including Rosary, prayers, hymns & scripture reading. All welcome!

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION this Friday following 6.45am Mass until 9.15 and following 9.15 Mass until 11.45am.

FIRST FRIDAY MASS WITH ANOINTING OF THE SICK will take place this Friday, December 5 at 12 noon followed by the Care Group Christmas Party for Seniors in the Parish Hall. All welcome. Contact Marian Heron on 9659 9385.

NOVEMBER MASSES The Book of Remembrance, containing the names of all the deceased for whom November Masses have been offered, is on the sanctuary near the paschal candle. Only the names of recently deceased and anniversaries are noted in the Massabielle this week.

LITURGY CORNER

Advent ushers in a new year in the Christian calendar. This year the majority of the Gospel readings will be from Mark for we have entered Year B in the three yearly cycle. Advent also means the predominant colour becomes purple – and this is wonderfully reflected in the natural world where the jacarandas and agapanthus delight the senses. Advent draws us into a time of waiting – waiting to celebrate that long ago birth of the Christ child, and preparation – preparing ourselves for the time when Jesus will come again. A verse from a poem by Thomas Troegar suggests we “Probe the present with the promise, Christ will come again. Let your daily actions witness, Christ will come again. Let your loving and your giving and your justice and forgiving be a sign to all the living: Christ will come again.” As today's Gospel reminds us we will only be aware of the presence of God when we ‘Stay Awake!’



DWF APPEAL Donations to this appeal have reached almost \$20,000.00 leaving us just over \$5,000.00 short of our quota. Thank you to all who have contributed so generously. Any further donations will be gratefully accepted and all donations are fully tax deductible.

STATUE OF OUR LADY WITH ST BERNADETTE

The Parish owns a beautiful statue of Our Lady with St Bernadette. Parishioners can borrow the statue for a week in 2009 by placing your names on the roster in the foyer. Book it now for a special occasion: anniversary, birthday etc, or as a thanksgiving for special graces or help received, or simply to encourage prayer in your home. Enquiries: Janina Mousley 9899 6060 or Alfred Jacobs 9894 8123.

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2008

Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

5.00pm Children and Young Families' Mass
7.00pm - Family Mass
9.30pm - LIFE TEEN Youth Mass
12.00pm - Traditional Midnight Mass
(preceded by carols from 11.30pm)

Thursday, December 25 - Christmas Day

7.30am, 9.00am, 10.30am – NO EVENING MASS

LIFE BEGINS AT 50: Christmas Dinner next Saturday 6 December at 7.00pm in the Parish Hall. 3 course meal \$48.00 per head. Final numbers and payment definitely by Monday 1 December. See notice board in the foyer for details. Contact Howard 98998983.



ACOLYTES AND ALTAR SERVERS Please collect information and roster forms from the Priests' Sacristy and Altar Servers' room regarding the Christmas function and roster for the holiday period.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION 2008-2009: Some work from session 3 is now on display around the Church. Please continue to pray for all our parish families participating in this preparation process. Sessions resume Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd February 2009.



HAMPER MASS

Those who have taken labels for Christmas hampers from the foyer are asked to return the assembled hamper on the weekend of 13/14 December. The 6.00pm Mass that Sunday is the annual Christmas Hamper Mass which will be celebrated with Fr Peter McGrath.



events and news for ALL parishioners ...

BIBLE STUDY with Mark 'Bible Geek' Hart: Our bible study finishes up tonight. All parishioners are welcome to join us in the Parish Hall following the Youth Mass.

events & news for Youth & Young Adults ...

Post-WYD BIBLE STUDY for anyone aged 16 – 35 concludes tonight. Join us in the Parish Hall following the youth mass and be entertained by Mark 'Bible Geek' Hart. All welcome!

Into LIFE for high school teens in yr 6-8: Last one for the year is happening this Monday night at 7pm in the Parish Hall. All welcome to join us for a night of fun, friends, faith and a sausage sizzle. Please bring along \$2.

LIFE Night for high school teens in yr 9-12: Our last one for the year will be on next weekend in the parish hall straight after the youth mass. Join us for **"The Amazing Race"** – our HUGE Christmas finale! All welcome - we would love to see you there.

SUMMER CAMP 2009 – Make sure you come along to this fantastic annual event. Four fun-filled days of beach, crazy activities, friends and faith and a great way to start the new year! Grab an information and registration form for you and your friends from the church foyer or online (www.lifeteenaustralia.com) and make sure you don't miss out on your spot! Please return forms to the parish office ASAP.

Life Teen produces fantastic **weekly podcasts** for free to help everyone get more out of our Sunday Mass. Listen to Mark 'Bible Geek' Hart give an insightful explanation and reflection on the upcoming mass readings. You can download these or listen to them online. Subscribe now from www.lifeteen.com or search for 'lifeteen.com' at the iTunes store. An excellent resource for lectors.

www.lifeteen.com is a great website for all teens and young adults. Get more out of our Catholic faith – the real answers and facts - along with the latest music and movie reviews and even just some random facts too!

www.lifeteenaustralia.com – for more info on what's on for youth and young adults at St Bernadette's or contact the Parish House on 9634 2622.

EMPLOYMENT The Ephpheta Centre is looking for a part-time Office Administration Assistant to work 3 days a week to be based at Flemington. Applications to Anthony Spata, Polding Centre, Level 5, 133 Liverpool St Sydney by December 5 or Anthony.spata@ado.syd.catholic.org.au. Ph: 9390 5317.

FATHER MAC'S HEAVENLY PUDDINGS available in 800gr or family size 1.6kg. Phone 9349 3066 or 0419 243285. Delivery arranged. Also available all year round at St Patrick's Coffee Shop (next to the church), 20 Grosvenor Street, Sydney

HELPERS NEEDED We need your support in helping us manage the logistics of this appeal; in sorting the hampers within the Parish Hall and then distributing them to the families on Tuesday 16th December. A work sheet has been posted on the notice board in the church foyer. Please indicate the times you are available to help, or phone Maureen Scully: 9634 6925.

A GIFT BEYOND CHRISTMAS Again this year an alternative to the hampers is offered. Called *A Gift Beyond Christmas*, it gives parishioners an opportunity to help disadvantaged mature age students complete the HSC at Loyola Senior High, Mt Drutt.



You are asked to take an envelope from the Christmas tree at the front of the church. Please return these to the church on the weekend of the Hamper Mass, December 13/14.

WORLD YOUTH DAY COMMEMORATIVE BOOK *Receive the Power* is a 200 page, hard cover record of World Youth Day 2008, incorporating stunning photos and addresses from the Pope, Cardinal Pell and other religious leaders. Purchase online for \$59.95 at www.catholicgiftshop.com.au or through the gift brochure in the Catholic Weekly.

SETS OF PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE FOYER TODAY

BOOKSHOP NEWS The 2009 Columban Calendar is now available at the Bookshop for only \$7.00. Buy one of the best religious calendars in the world and you will be helping our missionaries at the same time.

Vinnies Christmas Cards are now available from the bookshop. This year a pack contains 10 cards and costs \$6.50. This is great value. Please support this major fund raiser for the Castle Hill conference to help with our work for the poor, and also to *Keep Christ in Christmas*.

BLANKETS FOR THE NEEDY (formerly Knit or Crochet a Square). Well done and thank you to everyone involved with making squares for Vinnies.

Over 65 Blankets have been completed this Winter! The final morning tea for 2008 is on Wednesday 10 December at 10am in the Marian Centre. Everyone welcome. Transport available if needed. RSVP Jo on 9634 5961 or Hilary on 9894 5913.



EMPOWERED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! For all girls and young women (15-25) who are interested in spiritual things. The topic is about great women in sacred scripture who made a difference and how we can live as Catholic young women today. December 13/14 at Mt Schoenstatt, 230 Fairlight Road, Mulgoa. Cost \$15. BYO dinner. Bookings sr.m.luka@bigpond.com or 0409 221016.

St Bernadette's Parish Community
Parish House, 367 Old Northern Road, Castle Hill, NSW 2154

Telephone 9634 2622 Fax 9899 3511 Email: admin@stbernadette.org.au
 Web page: http://www.stbernadette.org.au

Parish Staff

Fr John Boyle, Parish Priest
 Fr Eugene Szondi, Assistant Priest
 Fr Sunny Michael, ms, Assistant Priest
 Sr Judy McLeod, rsm, Pastoral Associate
 Mrs Alice Bradshaw, Sacramental Co-ordinator
 Mr Ian Pomeroy, Into LIFE Youth Minister
 Mrs Frances Gallagher, Office Manager
 Mrs Monica Rubic, Parish Secretary (Finance: Mon-Thu)
 Mr Michael Watson, Maintenance Co-ordinator

Mass Times for this Week

Sunday Sat 6pm
 Sun 7.30am, 9am, 10.30am & 6pm
 Parish LIFE TEEN Youth Mass

Weekdays Mon 6.45am
 Tue 6.45 am
 Wed 6.45am, 9.15am
 Thurs 6.45am, 9.15 am
 First Fri 6.45am, 9.15 am, 12 noon
 Sat 8am

Mass on Public Holidays at 8am

Reconciliation Sat 8.30am-9am; 4.30pm-5.30pm

Baptisms and Marriages: By appointment only. Contact the Parish House. Please note the Church law: Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptised in the first few weeks; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it. [Can. 867 §1]

St Bernadette's Parish School: Mr Paul Colyer, Principal 9634 2898

Please pray for Kevin Damyon, Marie Wiley, Sr Eileen Markham and Leonard Francis Daniells who have died recently.

Prayers for the Sick: Nancy Gallagher.

ROSTERS FOR NEXT WEEKEND – December

ACOLYTES/ SERVERS	LECTORS	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF COMMUNION
VIGIL John Maker S4	Cheryl Braisby Jenny/Albert Agius	Iciar Quintana, Mark & Cathy Richmond, Alf Jacobs, Carmel James, Stephen & Janice MacMahon, Don & Remie de Leon
7.30AM Philip Myers S5	Tony Falzon Patricia Bright John O'Dea	Paul Hennessey, Anne Parker, Remy Sie, Bernard Rogers, Geoff Roney, Catherine Seddon
9.00AM Melvyn Myers S1	Trevor O'Shea Brian Blacklock Joanne O'Shea	Karen Askey, Hubert & Christine Jenneke, John Leach, Cathy & Greg Piggott, Trevor & Joanne O'Shea, Lena Madry
10.30AM Terry O'Mara S2	Tony Smith Philip Golamco Trinity Abbertson-Woo	Tim Abrams, Charlie & Coney Lau, Robert & Letty Yu, Ollie Nguy, Susana Lorenzo, Adel Boudib, Dawn Wickramasinghe

6.00 PARISH LIFE TEEN YOUTH MASS MINISTRY ROSTER - November 30

Adult Servers	Extraordinary Ministers of Communion	Musos
Alex Tomic Gillian Pak	Bill Clasquin Darren Edwards Ian Pomeroy James Waters	Bass Erich Gracias Flor Piano Belinda Lee Guitar Danile Ang Michael Smith Horns/Strings/Winds Matthew Ashton
Altar Preparation Josh Becker	Projectionist Josh Becker	Singers Cassie Knezevic Darian Jessup-Lonsdale Alice Bradshaw Julia Calixto Sara Ang
Lectors Jen Austin Raquel Lobo Stef Musgrave	Ushers Alfonso Aguilera Glen Ferry	
Altar Servers S3	Gift Preparation Sean Finucane	Welcomers Tina Muscat Tony Muscat

CHILDREN'S LITURGY Claire Vella Shane Robinson FLOWER ROSTER Margaret Jones	CHURCH HOUSEKEEPING Andrea Tomic, Janice Bonaccorso, Ivonne Purnomo, Krystyna Graczyk, Eva Mustapic COUNTING (1st Collection) Sandra Watson Denise Hicks	COUNTING (2nd Collection) Bill Lee, Greg Piggott, Eddy Pagnucco, Christopher Crowe BOOKSHOP Paula Boyd / Anne Parker / Jane Beard Crystal Good / Giuli & Serge Dogulin
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