

~ The Epistle ~

Vol. 18

ADVENT ~ CHRISTMAS 2015

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NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
THE ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CANADA • TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION
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THE MOST REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, ARCHBISHOP AND RECTOR



ALL too often when we speak of the Second Coming of our Lord, we tend to speak in terms of dread and distress. It is as if we had something to fear rather than to anticipate with joy. St. John wrote in his first Epistle that 'perfect love casts out all fear'. As Christians you and I, who love God and are loved by Him as His very own, should anticipate the Coming of our Lord in glory as a child anticipates Christmas morning.

The holy Season of Advent is not only meant as a time of preparation but also as a time of joyful anticipation. As we anticipate the joys of the Christmas Season about to come upon us; so we should anticipate the joy of that glorious day when we shall behold Jesus coming with power and great glory. When we shall look up and behold our redemption drawing nigh. There is a joy to this holy Season; and a thrilling expectation of all that is to come in God's time and in God's way.

In the ancient world history was regarded by the Stoics as being circular. They held that every three thousand years or so the world was consumed by a great fire, then it started all over again and history repeated itself. That meant, of course, that history was going nowhere and mankind was tramping round on a kind of eternal treadmill. Fortunately, this is not the view or understanding of history revealed by Jesus Christ to His disciples.

The Christian concept of history is that it is going somewhere; that history has a goal, and that goal is Jesus Christ. At the Second Advent of Christ all history will cease. There will indeed be a great consummation of the ages; but this consummation will not bring about a repetition of the past but a new and glorious age. For some this consummation will bring redemption and everlasting life; for others (by their own choices and decisions) it will bring fear and foreboding, judgment and damnation.

We do not know when the consummation of the world will take place nor what it will be like; that is not ours to know. But what we do know is that, as Christians, we live in the shadow of Cross, and in the certainty that we are loved by God. We are being prepared by Him to dwell forever in the glory of His everlasting Kingdom.

In Saint Luke's Gospel there is a passage describing how Jesus would spend the days teaching in the Temple, but at night would go out and stay in the Mount of Olives. This is not just a filler but a profound statement of how we should spend *our* time if we are to be prepared for the day of redemption. Jesus spent the day amidst the crowds of the Temple; He spent the night beneath the stars with God. He gained strength to meet the crowds through His quiet time alone with His Father. He could face the day-to-day world of men because He came to men each day from God's Presence. This is how we must face our world; coming to each day from God's presence. Prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection, are the cornerstones of life that prepares us both for tomorrow and for our life with God.

The Season of Advent then is for Christians a time of prayer and penitence, a time for eagerly awaiting the greatest gift of all, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in time and eternity. In turn, the Season of Christmas is a time of prayer and giving, when we celebrate the greatest gift God could give to His people – the gift of His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are not ashamed to profess our faith in Him; nor to proclaim to all the world:

Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

As we now enter into the Season of Advent, please allow me to wish each of you a holy and prayer-filled Advent; and with the coming Season of light and joy, my prayer that you and your family and friends may experience a blessed, holy and happy Christmas.

May the blessing of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son, and the abiding presence of God the Holy Spirit, be with you in Advent and throughout the Christmas Season.

Archbishop Shane B. Janzen

FAITH IN THE FACE OF TERRORISM
A Sermon by Archbishop Shane Janzen

ON the Sunday Next Before Advent – the conclusion of the Church Year – we celebrate the Sovereignty of God in Christ, The Eternal King. We read in holy Scripture that He is the ‘Lord our Righteousness’, the King of kings and Lord of lords. So how do we square this truth with the reality of all that has transpired in our world over the last year? How can we believe and preach the Sovereignty of God in the face of terrorism, violence and war perpetrated in the name of God?

Paris, Ottawa, Boston, Bali; Belgium, Holland, Australia – the list of cities and countries where terrorism and violence in the name of religion has been perpetrated continues to grow. In each and every case, as Christians, as Canadians, as men and women, mothers and fathers, people of faith, we have in these stark images the very face of evil.

One verse from Scripture helps to put all of this into perspective. We read in John 10:10, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

It is important that we, as Christians, recognize the ultimate reason for this violence and terror. Scripture again records: “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that built it; unless the Lord keeps the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” (*Ps. 127:1*) and again we read: “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance.” (*Ps. 33:12*) Canada was founded as a Judeo-Christian country; the source of our laws, our freedoms, our rights and our responsibilities, were based on the commandments of God and the teachings of Christ. Yet now in this 21st century, somehow somewhere along the way God is no longer the Lord of this nation – despite what we sing in our national anthem or proclaim in our Constitution. We have lost our way in the midst of political correctness, diversity, so-called tolerance, and the liberal democratic ideal.

Many people ask the question: “Where was God when all of this violence, hatred and terror was going on?” Why did God allow this to happen? To which as a bishop and as a Christian, I respond: God is still on His Throne of Glory in Heaven; He is still the Sovereign Lord. God did not do this! Satan is the ultimate terrorist. Yes there are human agents, men and women of hatred and violence, who in the name of their God perpetrated these heinous acts, but who is behind them, who is the ultimate source? Scripture reminds us that we’re not wrestling with flesh and blood. Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.”

The terrorist attacks in Paris and Ottawa, London and New York and in so many other places across our world did not take God by surprise. God knows the wickedness of human hearts. Satan could not have done this without men’s compliance. And when God made human beings, He gave them free will. That’s one of the greatest blessings and greatest dangers that we have. Human beings are free to choose; but we’re not free to choose the consequences of our choices. These terrorists chose evil. But their choices have not taken God by surprise.

Some people think that sooner or later we are going to make this world a safer place, that through human ingenuity, human agencies, more ‘enlightened’ education and better governments there will be peace and justice on earth. While these desires and efforts are to be commended, human initiative is not enough. By our own schemes, devices, and plans, we will never build an earthly utopia – it has been tried before and failed. The world is indeed in need of a saviour but that saviour is not to be found in human enterprise or human agencies but in the God-made-human, Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” Our Saviour is not the author of death but of life. Jesus came that we might live, not die. Satan comes that we might die and not live. Scripture tells us this is the task of Satan, who is the ‘father of lies’ and the ‘prince of darkness’.

The thief comes, the master terrorist comes, Satan comes, to steal and to kill and to destroy. And in the absence of the Lord building the city and watching over the nation – in the absence of a nation that looks to the true and living God as their Sovereign and Christ as their King, Satan wills out, for only the power and rule and providence of God is able to prevent the wiles of Satan and the wickedness he unleashes.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, one of the major US television networks aired an interview with the daughter of Billy Graham. The interviewer asked her, “How could God let something like this happen?” Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, “I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we’ve been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?”

Anne Graham ended her response by saying: “Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with, ‘We reap what we sow’.”

Now we may not be directly responsible for the acts of terrorism we have witnessed but I think we do need to ask ourselves the question: "Where is God in all of this?" And by this I mean, where do we as a nation and people recognize and place God in our public and private lives? Have we indeed crowned Christ as King; or has God become but a private affair with no place in the public square? Are we as Christians guilty of compliance with this state of affairs; have we somehow in some way been a party to an increasingly secular state devoid of its Judeo-Christian foundation?

What then should we do as Christians and as Canadians? Let me share with you six actions.

First, trust. Trust God. He will see us through if we acknowledge Him and follow His pathway. The Scripture says, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." (Ps. 56:3) There's no fear or panic in Heaven, only plans.

Secondly, love. Don't let your heart become a headquarters for hate. Let the terrible wickedness of terrorism and religious hatred be but the black background upon which the diamond of God's love can be seen. This is an opportunity for us to show what true religion is, to show what the grace of God is, to witness to the truth and values and foundation of the Christian faith. Our faith is not the faith of the sword or hatred or coercion.

Thirdly, it is time to repent – to repent as a people and as a nation. All the prayer in the world is not going to do any good unless we repent and recognize our part in the slide to secularism masquerading as pluralism and tolerance.

Fourthly, it is time to speak. We need to speak out. We need to speak up. As the night grows darker, the saints need to grow brighter. These terrorist acts are based on a perverted understanding of religion that comes out of the hearts of wicked and violent people. It first started in their heads. They had a concept, an idea, a distortion; and then they acted it out.

You cannot kill an idea or ideology with a bomb. You cannot shoot it down with a bullet. The only thing that will overcome an ideology of hatred is one of love and mercy – the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Would to God we would share the love of Jesus, that we would live the truth in Christ, believe the truth in Christ, and speak that truth (as St. Paul exhorts) with love. Jesus said, "The truth shall set you free." It's time that we as Christians speak out.

Fifthly, it's time we lived out as a nation what we proclaim in the opening words of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, namely that we recognize the sovereignty of God in and over our land, its public institutions, laws and way of life. If we seek the protection and

providence of Almighty God then we must first acknowledge the place and position of God in the public square, and not be afraid or reluctant or embarrassed to do so in the name of pluralism or political correctness. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

Finally, pray. Gather your family and pray. Gather your neighbors and pray. Go to your places of work and pray. Call our leaders to prayer. Pray that God's kingdom will come and that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

OUR journey sets out from God in our creation, and returns to God at the final judgment. As the bird rises from the earth to fly, and must some time return to the earth from which it rose; so God sends us forth to fly, and we must fall back into the hands of God at last. But God does not wait for the failure of our power and the expiry of our days to drop us back into His lap. He goes Himself to meet us and everywhere confronts us. Where is the countenance which we must finally look in the eyes, and not be able to turn away our head? It smiles up at Mary from the cradle, it calls Peter from the nets, it looks on him with grief when he has denied his Master. Our Judge meets us at every step of our way, with forgiveness on His lips and succour in His hands. He offers us these things while there is yet time. Every day opportunity shortens, our scope for learning our Redeemer's love is narrowed by twenty-four hours, and we come nearer to the end of our journey, when we shall fall into the hands of the living God, and touch the heart of the devouring fire.

When Mary laid Jesus Christ upon her knees, when she searched Him with her eyes, when she fed Him at the breast, she did not study to love Him because she ought, she loved Him because He was dear: He was her Son. His conception had been supernatural, perplexing, affrighting; it had called for faith in the incomprehensible, and obedience beyond the limit of human power. His nativity was human and sweet, and the love with which she embraced it was a natural growth, inseparable from the thing she loved. She was blessed above all creatures, because she loved her Maker inevitably and by simple nature; even though it needed the sword-wounds of the Passion to teach her fully that it was her Saviour whom she loved. The Son of Mary is the Son of all human kind; we embrace Him with the love of our kind, that we may be led up with Mary to a love beyond kind, a selfless love for the supreme Goodness, when we too shall have climbed the ladder of the Cross.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

EACH year at this time, Christians, as well as men and women of good will throughout the world, pause to reflect upon that Holy Night, when so many centuries ago lonely shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night, looked up and beheld the Christmas Star - 'arise, shine, for thy light has come'. The angel appeared unto them -- they were frightened by all they saw and heard -- yet in the dark and cold of that night the Word had leaped down from heaven and the Saviour was born into the world, His name: JESUS *Emmanuel* God-with-us.

The centuries which have come and gone may have dulled the world's sense of its wonder, but not for us -- not for all those who still look with the eyes of a child at the wonder of that Holy night; who ponder anew the mystery of the Incarnation -- God coming among us as one of us. A mortal body, a human soul, became the habitation of God -- the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. *Perfect God, perfect Man; One however, not by conversion of Godhead into flesh, but by taking of Manhood into God -- begotten not made.*

From the far reaches of time back to the Eternal Word, the divine plan of God was set in motion -- that in the fullness of time He would come to be our Saviour. He would make Himself known to those who He created in His own image and likeness. He who is Love took the one way in which to reveal His love most perfectly: He became one of us. Through the child of Bethlehem and in the life and ministry of the Man who would walk the way of Calvary, God spoke to us with human lips, and looked on us with human eyes. He touched the life of man and woman as only the Son of God could do. He came among us in the frail and lowly child of Bethlehem, born in a manger in an obscure village in the outer edges of a once mighty empire. A son of Adam, but Son of God too, with a capacity for faith and eternal things, bearing within Himself an unquenchable spark of the divine -- the very revelation of God.

Huxley wrote, "The highest altar man can raise is to the unknown and unknowable God." But if you have seen Jesus Christ, you cannot say that, for His birth, His life and passion, and victory over sin and death, these reveal God to man. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." No longer can we, who know the story of that holy night -- we who know the child cradled in the arms of Mary and watched over by Joseph and the shepherds -- no longer can we raise an altar 'to an unknown god'. God is with us, and therefore known to us. With the angelic host we join in the joyful proclamation of that night: 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men'.

The mystery of the Incarnation unfolds for us as the majesty of that night unfolded for those who followed the Star to Bethlehem. God is with us to seek and to save. Salvation in its fullness -- forgiveness, healing, comfort, moral strength -- cannot be given from afar or in some impersonal fashion. Sin is not forgiven by the stroke of a pen, and pain is not removed from the heart by a mere word of sympathy from one who knows nothing of its anguish. Therefore God to be our Saviour humbled Himself and entered into our life, faced our temptations, carried our sorrows, and bore our sins on the Cross, that we might know the length and breadth His love would go for our redemption. He came to show us the Way and to reveal the eternal plan of God for our salvation.

All of this in the little child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger that long, dark night so many centuries ago. A night in which a young mother and her husband had come because the decree of Caesar Augustus had compelled them to make the journey. They were poor, and when they came to the town, no one took any notice of their coming and no one helped them to find a place in which to stay. Joseph and Mary came wearily to the end of their long road yet found no room in the village inn, and nothing to do but to find a corner in a stable where Mary could come to rest. There amidst the simple creatures of God, she gave birth to the Creator of all, the Son of God.

These travellers from Nazareth had come late, the inn was crowded; through no hostile act or deliberate turning away, the holy family found no room in which to lay their heads, it was as simple as that. Just so casually, through the drift of time and circumstances, and through no any particular hostile will or deliberate act, many men and women too exclude Jesus from the inn of their hearts. We, like them, may have filled all the space we have with other guests. We do not mean to shut God out, but our thoughts and feelings are so occupied with other matters that God, and prayer, and worship cannot find a place. In this world with its noisy and demanding clamour the crowd of common thoughts and common interests may have poured in upon us and taken possession of our time and our attention, and when Christ comes with His infinite gift of love for the enrichment of our souls, for the fulfilling of our lives, there is no room for Him.

The innkeeper did not realize whom he had turned away. We never do know when the great possibilities of God are at our door unless we have taken the time and effort to keep our spirits and souls alive to the coming of Christ. The mystery waiting to bring you to the birth of a redeeming Saviour may be at your doorstep -- do not turn Him away but recognize and rejoice in your salvation.

*For unto us is born a Saviour,
Who is Christ the Lord.*

SAINT NICHOLAS: THE REAL 'SANTA CLAUS'

AN ancient merchant had three lovely daughters. But due to a tragic turn of events, he had lost all hope that his daughters would be able to marry and live a happy life. It was the third century, and this businessman had lost his fortune when pirates pillaged his ship. His beautiful daughters were of marrying age, and without money he could give them no dowry.

In those days, young women without a dowry had few options for survival. Many were forced into slavery or prostitution.

The father prayed around the clock that somehow God would grant a miracle for his family. A young Christian bishop discovered the plight of this man and his daughters. This bishop was a wealthy man, having received a large inheritance at the death of his parents. One evening, in the middle of the night, the bishop secretly slipped a sack of gold through a window into the merchant's house. This timely gift saved the virtue of the man's oldest daughter.

Later, another sack saved the second daughter.

Anticipating a third gift of gold, the father determined to discover who was helping his family. He stayed up all night and when the sack was dropped through the window, the father ran down the road and apprehended the mysterious benefactor. The merchant immediately recognized the young bishop and tried to give thanks to him.

The humble bishop deflected the praise. "No, all thanks go to God, not to me." The father answered, "I need to let everybody know you did this." The bishop responded, "No, you must promise me that not until I'm dead will you let anyone know how you received the gold." This compassionate bishop believed literally Christ's injunction that when we give, we should do so in secret, sacrificially in Christ's name and not our own.

The merchant promised that he would tell no one of the way this holy man helped save this family. And it wasn't until after his death that the world learned the numerous stories of the generosity of this bishop of the early Church, Saint Nicholas of Myra.

Through his timely gifts, Saint Nicholas helped to restore the hope of this family, and hundreds more in his community. But the ministry of Saint Nicholas extended beyond giving gifts. History tells us that he was persecuted by the Roman authorities and imprisoned for his faith. Later, when Emperor Constantine made Christianity the state religion, St. Nicholas boldly defended the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicaea (AD 325).

Throughout his ministry, Saint Nicholas selflessly poured out his life and his fortune as he served the people in and around his home.

The story of our modern Santa Claus begins with this same Nicholas, who was born during the third century in Patara, a village in what is now Demre, Turkey. His wealthy parents raised him as a Christian. But they died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young, and he was left with their fortune. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," St. Nicholas used his inheritance to assist the suffering, the sick, and the poor.

During the persecution of Christians by Roman Emperor Diocletian, St. Nicholas was exiled and imprisoned along with thousands of other Christians. Though he suffered for his faith in Jesus Christ, mercifully St. Nicholas survived this persecution and was eventually released.

After returning to his post as bishop, St. Nicholas was called upon to defend Christianity against the heresy of Arianism. A contemporary of St. Nicholas and an early church theologian, Arius taught that God the Father and God the Son did not exist together eternally. Arius also taught that the pre-incarnate Jesus was a divine being created by (and possibly inferior to) the Father at some point, before which the Son did not exist.

Church history tells us that St. Nicholas vigorously fought Arianism, and was listed as a participant in the First Council of Nicaea. This important gathering, held in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day Iznik in Turkey), was convened by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325 A.D. This was the first ecumenical council of the early Christian Church, and it produced the first uniform Christian doctrine -- the Nicene Creed.

It is also believed that St. Nicholas participated in the destruction of several pagan temples, among them the temple of Artemis. Because the celebration of the goddess Diana's birth is on December 6th, some have speculated that this date was deliberately chosen for St. Nicholas's feast day to overshadow or replace the pagan celebrations. But December 6 is also listed as the date of St. Nicholas's death, which is more likely the reason the feast is celebrated on this day.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be honoured by Christians of all denominations.. By his example of generosity to those in need, St. Nicholas is a model of Christ's call to selfless giving.

Widely celebrated in Europe, St. Nicholas' feast day on December 6th kept alive the stories of his generosity and kindness. December 6th is still the main day for gift giving in much of Europe. In the Netherlands, candies are thrown in the door, along with chocolate initial letters, small gifts, and riddles. Dutch children leave carrots and hay in their shoes for St. Nick's horse,

hoping it will be exchanged for gifts. Simple gift-giving on St. Nicholas Day helps to preserve a Christmas Day focus on the Christ Child.

The story of St. Nicholas was almost forgotten during the 16th century as Protestants downplayed the veneration of the saints. Both reformers and counter-reformers tried to eliminate the customs of St. Nicholas' Day, but they had very little long-term success.

Because the common people loved St. Nicholas, he survived on the European continent as people continued to place nuts, apples, and sweets in shoes left beside beds, on windowsills, or before the hearth.

The first Europeans to arrive in the New World brought the story of St. Nicholas with them. The Vikings dedicated their cathedral to him in Greenland. On his first voyage, Columbus named a Haitian port for St. Nicholas on December 6, 1492. In the United Kingdom, St. Nicholas became 'Father Christmas' with the red robes and white fur trimming of a bishop.

After the American Revolution, New Yorkers were looking to break with British tradition, and they remembered with pride the colony's nearly-forgotten Dutch roots. John Pintard, an influential patriot who founded the New York Historical Society in 1804, promoted St. Nicholas as the patron saint of both the society and the city.

In January 1809, Washington Irving published the satirical Knickerbocker's History of New York, which made numerous references to a jolly St. Nicholas character. This was not a saintly European bishop, but rather a Dutch burgher with a clay pipe. The jolly elf image received a big boost in 1823 from a poem destined to become immensely popular, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," -- now better known as "The Night Before Christmas."

Washington Irving's St. Nicholas strongly influenced the poem's portrayal of a round, pipe-smoking, elf-like St. Nicholas. The poem generally has been attributed to Clement Clark Moore, a professor of biblical languages at New York's Episcopal General Theological Seminary.

In North America, the popular name Santa Claus was taken from the Dutch Sinterklaas, which originated with a contracted form of Sint Nicolaas (Saint Nicholas). The "Mall Santa" that we are all familiar with -- sporting a red suit with white cuffs and collar, and black leather belt, became the popular image in Canada and the United States in the late 19th century and early 20th century because of the "Merry Old Santa Claus" images created by political cartoonist Thomas Nast.

Beginning in 1863, Nast began a series of annual drawings in Harper's Weekly that were inspired by the descriptions found in Washington Irving's work. These drawings established a

rotund Santa with flowing beard, fur garments, and a clay pipe. Nast drew his Santa until 1886, and his work had a major influence in creating the modern American Santa Claus.

In the mid-20th Century a series of Coca-Cola advertisements featuring a rotund and jovial Santa Claus was drawn by artist Haddon Sundblom and further popularized Nast's depiction.

There are, of course, controversial aspects of the North American Santa Claus fiction. Some Christians believe he takes the focus of Christmas away from Jesus Christ, placing it on a fictional character with little redemptive value. Others insist that it is unhealthy for parents to lie to their children to enforce their belief in Santa Claus. And others say that Santa Claus is a symbol of the commercialization and consumerism that has seized the Christmas holiday in the West. Still for others, Santa Claus and the modern celebration of Christmas is seen as an intrusion upon their own national traditions.

But beneath all the symbolism and tradition that has been attached to the modern Santa Claus, he, like so many other "Father Christmas" characters before him can hearken back to a simple Christian bishop who loved God and loved people. Saint Nicholas displayed his love through the giving of gifts, just as our Heavenly Father gave the gift of His Son to us that first Christmas morning over 2000 years ago.

In this season, we celebrate how God gave His Son, Jesus, to bring hope to the world. May each of us prayerfully consider how we, like Saint Nicholas, can give of ourselves to help restore hope to those that God brings into our lives.





THE CHRISTMAS NOVENA (December 16th to 24th)

A Novena is a nine-day period of prayer in preparation for some particular feast in the Christian Calendar or to pray for some particular intention. The first novena was kept, at the express command of the Risen Christ, by the Apostles, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the disciples in the Upper Room from the day of Our Lord's Ascension to the day of Pentecost (*Acts 1:12-14*). The earliest ecclesiastical novena recorded is one in preparation for Christmas. The Christmas Novena begins on December 16, as noted in the Book of Common Prayer, p. xiii.

The Prayers: (*to be said daily*)

OLORD Jesus Christ, Who for our sake didst vouchsafe to descend from Thy throne of glory in heaven to this vale of tears; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary and wast made man: Make, we beseech thee, our hearts a fit habitation for Thyself. Beautify and fill them with all spiritual graces, and possess them wholly by Thy power. Give us grace to prepare for Thy Coming with deep humility, to receive Thee with burning love, and to hold Thee with a firm faith; that we may never leave Thee nor forsake Thee; Who livest and reignest, for ever and ever. Amen.

Here say one of the following 'O' Antiphons, according to the day:

Dec. 16: O WISDOM, which camest out of the mouth of the Most High, and reachest from one end to another, mightily and sweetly ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence.

Dec. 17: O ADONAI (Lord) and Leader of the house of Israel, who appearedst in the bush to Moses in a flame of fire, and gavest him the Law in Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

Dec. 18: O ROOT OF JESSE, which standest for an ensign of the people, at whom Kings shall shut their mouths: Come and deliver us and tarry not.

Dec. 19: O KEY OF DAVID, and the Sceptre of the house of Israel, that openest and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth: Come and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house, and him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.

Dec. 20: O DAYSPRING, Brightness of the Light Everlasting, and Sun of Righteousness: Come and enlighten him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.

Dec. 21: O THOMAS DIDYMUS, to thee it was vouchsafed to touch Christ risen: Whom we petition, by His mercy from on high, to aid us in our miseries, lest we be doomed with the lost when the Judge appeareth.

Dec. 22: O KING OF THE NATIONS, and their Desire, the Cornerstone, who makest both one: Come and save mankind, whom Thou formedst of clay.

Dec. 23: O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver, the Desire of all nations, and their Salvation: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

Dec. 24: O VIRGIN OF VIRGINS, how shall this be? For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall there be after. Daughters of Jerusalem, why marvel ye at me? The thing which ye behold is a divine mystery.

Finally, conclude with the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Advent Collect:

OUR FATHER, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women; And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

ALmighty GOD, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which Thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the Last Day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through the same Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.



~ ~ ~ CATHEDRAL CALENDAR ~ ~ ~

NOVEMBER 29 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
HIGH MASS 10:00 AM
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (BUDGET) 11:30 AM

NOVEMBER 30 ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE
MASS 9:30 AM

DECEMBER 3 MASS 9:30 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:30 AM

DECEMBER 6 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 8 CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
MASS 9:30 AM

DECEMBER 10 MASS 9:30 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:30 AM

DECEMBER 13 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 17 MASS 9:30 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:30 AM

DECEMBER 20 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 21 SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE
MASS 9:30 AM

DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
HIGH MASS ~ 8:00 PM

DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY
HIGH MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 26 SAINT STEPHEN THE PROTO-MARTYR
MASS 9:30 AM

DECEMBER 27 CHRISTMAS I: SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 28 THE HOLY INNOCENTS
MASS 9:30 AM

JANUARY 3, 2016 CHRISTMAS II: THE HOLY FAMILY
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
PARISH CHRISTMAS DINNER 11:30 AM