

~ The Epistle ~

Vol. 22

ADVENT ~ CHRISTMAS 2019

No. 4

NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CANADA • TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION
990 FALMOUTH ROAD, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA V8X 3A3
THE MOST REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, ARCHBISHOP & RECTOR



ADVENT as we know is a time of prayer and penitence, for eagerly awaiting the greatest gift of all, the Saviour Jesus Christ. He is the Light who shines in the darkness of our world. Advent wreaths are lighted. We join the angels and the saints in proclaiming the great wonders God has worked among us. We hear anew the prophecies of old; and we are renewed in our joy and hope at the promise of our Lord's return, when He shall wipe every tear from our eyes, and make all things new. 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 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, for:

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.

Archbishop Shane B. Janzen

ADVENT: A SEASON OF PRAYER
by Bishop Craig Botterill

MOST of the prayer in the Anglican Church, Mas with other branches of the Catholic Church, is "corporate". These are prayers which we say together when we meet for worship. A priest leads us in reciting scripted prayers. Our participation in this public worship is important for our spiritual life, and is commanded by scripture, but sadly it is the only form of prayer that many people engage in. Each Christian must also learn to pray on their own as individuals.

Some people never bother to pray as individuals and others give it a try and give up using self-deceiving rationalizations such as:

- "I don't need to pray in any 'formal' sense. God knows I love him."
- "I just can't find the time to pray."
- "My faith isn't deep enough to get anything out of prayer."
- "I've tried learning how to pray, but I just don't 'get it'. It's too hard."

These myths are deceptions. A private prayer life is essential to the Christian life. Prayer is "a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God". Prayer is the lifeblood of your faith. Without prayer, your faith will die.

So how do we pray? When do we pray? What do we pray?

Learning to pray is like learning to ski or learning to run a marathon. If you strap on your brand new skis and take the chair lift up to the tallest hill and hurl yourself down you will not learn to ski and when you are released from hospital you will never venture onto the slopes again. If a new found zeal for running sees you enter the Boston Marathon, only to collapse in a fit of wheezing three blocks into the race you will quit in frustration.

SO START SIMPLE. Many Christians who have decided to learn individual prayer jump right into the deep end, keeping prayer diaries, buying every book on prayer, going on silent retreats, and setting aside hours each day to pray. In so doing they see little result, become frustrated, and quickly burn themselves out. Then they quit praying.

Begin with something as simple as disciplining yourself to offer a simple prayer every morning that you wake from sleep. You don't need to get up and light a candle by an icon and kneel. When you first open your eyes and you begin to clear the fog from your mind and as you lay in bed simply think of God and speak to Him. Your prayer can be as simple as:

- "Good Morning God", or
- "Lord I will serve you today", or

- "Lord, help me love and serve you today", or
- "Lord, thank-you for guarding me through the night and safely bringing me to the beginning of this new day."

Pick something simple that you can remember and that resonates with you so that you say it from your heart and discipline yourself to say it upon waking each day.

Once you are up and about try to find time each morning, or each evening, or both, to open your Book of Common Prayer and to pray one of the prescribed prayers found in the section: "Prayers for Families" that begin on page 728. Here is an example of a structured morning prayer from that section:

O GOD, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. In the morning I will direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

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. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

I give thee hearty thanks, O heavenly Father, for the rest of the past night, and for the gift of a new day. Grant that I may so pass its hours in the perfect freedom of thy service, that at eventide I may again give thanks unto thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O LORD God, who hast bidden light to shine out of darkness, and who hast again wakened me to praise thee for thy goodness and to ask for thy grace: Accept now the offering of my worship and thanksgiving, and grant unto me all such requests as may be acceptable to thy holy will. Make me to live as a child of the light, and heir of thy everlasting kingdom. Remember, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies, thy whole Church, all who join with me in prayer, and all my brethren, wherever they may be, who stand in need of thine aid. Pour down upon me all the riches of thy grace, so that, redeemed in soul and body, and stedfast in faith, I may ever praise thy wonderful and holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O GOD, Most High and Holy, Three in One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I offer to thee this day Myself, my soul and body, To be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee; To whom be all praise and glory. Amen.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with me evermore. Amen.

The reason to recite a structured prayer from the Prayer Book is to prepare yourself to then pray your private prayers. A structured prayer, like the example above, helps you to clear your mind of distracting thoughts and to "centre" yourself

on the conversation with God that will follow. This is the time to “make time” to pray. No matter how busy a person is, no matter how many screaming children may be visiting or other excuse, each of us can find 5 minutes out of each 1,440 minutes that comprise each day, to do this. If opportunity allows find a place and posture that you are most comfortable with. If you can put up a little framed Icon and light a candle and sit comfortably in a dimly lit room that will help, but it is not necessary. Some find kneeling a distraction to private prayer. If it helps, great, if it doesn't then sit, stand, walk in the garden, whatever helps you to focus your thoughts on your prayers.

Having cleared your mind and prepared and centred yourself with a structured prayer, try to follow this simple pattern each time you pray. Study and commit to memory (through daily practise) the following “hand” analogy or formula suggested by the Church of England: Use your hand. Your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray for.

Thumb

This is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, your church, relationships that support and sustain you.

Index Finger

This is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, clergy, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

Middle Finger

This is the tallest finger. Pray for all the important people who have power in the world, like world leaders and their governments, members of parliament and local councillors, the Royal Family, other world leaders and their governments.

Ring Finger

This is the weakest finger on your hand. It cannot do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

Little Finger

This is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for yourself.

How do you pray for yourself? Be honest. Tell God that you know you have sinned and are less than perfect and that you need His help and assistance to be healthy and whole. Tell Him what troubles you. Give Him your anxieties. Ask Him to lift them from your shoulders and carry them for you. Tell Him when you are angry and hurt. Ask him for forgiveness and healing and strength.

Pour your heart out. This is not the time to put on your Sunday best and to pray to be seen, this

is what Jesus spoke of when His disciples asked him to teach them to pray and He responded that they should “go into your closet and pray to your Father in secret”. These are your most intimate thoughts, your joys, your sorrows, your worries. Just you and God, no one standing around to impress.

You will find over time that following this discipline (yes I know people don't like that word, but remember the analogy of exercise and preparing for a sport or race) you will find the words to say to God. And don't forget when you come to your little finger and you begin to pray for yourself to ask in humble petition: “God, help me to pray”!

Besides the daily routine of private prayer that I've outlined above, talk to God throughout the day. Routine communication with God will become comfortable and relaxed as you go about your day. “Lord, this is my third time around the block, please show me a vacant parking space”, “Lord, you must have a sense of humour because I pray for you to help me love others and you have sent me this difficult person!” and so on. Constant “talking in your head” to God is not a symptom of a mental illness, it is a symptom of holiness.

It is also helpful, as 17th century Anglican theologian Jeremy Taylor taught, to frequently, throughout the day, offer spontaneous short structured prayers to God. Walking up the stairs with the laundry basket? Well you have time before you reach where you are going to recite something in your head that is familiar such as the Lord's Prayer, or the Hail Mary, or the Glory be, or the “Jesus Prayer” recited by the Eastern Orthodox: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”

The secret here is to simply recite something on the spur of the moment that keeps open your communication with God and returns your mind several times during the day to Him.

Finally, returning to the structure of daily private prayer, when you have become comfortable with the routine outlined above, consider adding (slowly) other prayer activities, such as reading Compline to yourself as you lay in bed and before you turn off the light. It is found on page 722 of the Book of Common Prayer. It is the prayer that monks have offered before turning into bed for nearly two thousand years. There are many other examples of formal prayers and private ‘liturgies’ you can add to your daily prayer routine, including of course the “Daily Offices” of Morning and Evening Prayer (with their daily prescribed readings from Scripture) but do not take on too much too quickly, or like the person who thinks they can run the marathon when they are not in shape, you will quickly collapse at your efforts and in frustration avoid even trying to pray in the future.



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*)

O LORD 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 shuttest 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 DIDYMU, 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, 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.

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.





THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

ON the **First Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...A Partridge in a Pear Tree: The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, whose birthday we celebrate on December 25, the first day of Christmas. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge that feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, recalling the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem: "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks, but you would not have it so" (*Luke 13:34*)

On the **Second Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me... Two Turtle Doves: The Old and New Testaments, which together bear witness to God's self-revelation in history and the creation of a people to tell the Story of God to the world.

On the **Third Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Three French Hens: The Three Theological Virtues: 1) Faith, 2) Hope, and 3) Love (*1 Corinthians 13:13*)

On the **Fourth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Four Calling Birds: The Four Gospels: 1) Matthew, 2) Mark, 3) Luke, and 4) John, which proclaim the Good News of God's reconciliation of the world to Himself in Jesus Christ.

On the **Fifth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Five Gold Rings: The first Five Books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah or the Pentateuch: 1) Genesis, 2) Exodus, 3) Leviticus, 4) Numbers, and 5) Deuteronomy, which gives the history of humanity's sinful failure and God's response of grace in the creation of a people to be a light to the world.

On the **Sixth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Six Geese A-laying: The six days of creation that confesses God as Creator and Sustainer of the world (*Genesis 1*).

On the **Seventh Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Seven Swans a-swimming: The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: 1) prophecy, 2) ministry, 3) teaching, 4) exhortation, 5) giving, 6) leading, and 7) compassion (*Romans 12:6-8; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:8-11*)

On the **Eighth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Eight Maids a-milking: The eight Beatitudes: 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, 2) those who mourn, 3) the meek, 4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, 5) the merciful, 6) the pure in heart, 7) the peacemakers, 8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (*Matthew 5:3-10*)

On the **Ninth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Nine Ladies Dancing: The nine Fruit of the Holy Spirit: 1) love, 2) joy, 3) peace, 4) patience, 5) kindness, 6) generosity, 7) faithfulness, 8) gentleness, and 9) self-control. (*Galatians 5:22*)

On the **Tenth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Ten Lords a-leaping: The ten commandments: 1) You shall have no other gods before me; 2) Do not make an idol; 3) Do not take God's name in vain; 4) Remember the Sabbath Day; 5) Honor your father and mother; 6) Do not murder; 7) Do not commit adultery; 8) Do not steal; 9) Do not bear false witness; 10) Do not covet. (*Exodus 20:1-17*)

On the **Eleventh Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Eleven Pipers Piping: The eleven Faithful Apostles: 1) Simon Peter, 2) Andrew, 3) James, 4) John, 5) Philip, 6) Bartholomew, 7) Matthew, 8) Thomas, 9) James bar Alphaeus, 10) Simon the Zealot, 11) Judas bar James. (*Luke 6:14-16*). [The list does not include the twelfth disciple, Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.]

On the **Twelfth Day of Christmas** my true love gave to me...Twelve Drummers Drumming: The twelve points of doctrine in the *Apostles' Creed*: 1) I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. 2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. 3) He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. 4) He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell [the grave]. 5) On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. 6) He will come again to judge the living and the dead. 7) I believe in the Holy Spirit, 8) the holy catholic Church, 9) the communion of saints, 10) the forgiveness of sins, 11) the resurrection of the body, 12) and the life everlasting.



~ ~ ~ CATHEDRAL CALENDAR ~ ~ ~

DECEMBER 1 FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 5 SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE, DR. ~ MASS 10:00 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:45 AM

DECEMBER 8 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 12 CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ~ 10:00 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:45 AM

DECEMBER 15 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT (GAUDETE SUNDAY)
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 18 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ~ 1:00 PM

DECEMBER 19 ADVENT EMBER DAY ~ MASS 10:00 AM
STUDY GROUP 10:45 AM

DECEMBER 21 FEAST OF SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE
MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 22 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS ~ 8:00 PM

DECEMBER 25 CHRISTMAS DAY
THE CHRIST MASS ~ 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 26 SAINT STEPHEN THE PROTO-MARTYR
MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 27 SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 28 THE HOLY INNOCENTS
MASS 10:00 AM

DECEMBER 29 SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS DAY
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

JANUARY 5 THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD (*TRANSFERRED*)
MATTINS 9:15 AM
SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
CHRISTMAS-EPIPHANY LUNCH 11:45 AM
(CATHEDRAL CHURCH HALL)

[ARCHBISHOP JANZEN IS IN ATLANTA FROM JANUARY 14 TO JANUARY 20]