

RECTOR'S THOUGHTS...

LAST THINGS FIRST!



Advent Sunday commences a new Church Year. The word *advent* comes from the Latin *adventus*...meaning *coming*. Advent is the season of preparation for the First Coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and anticipates his Second Coming at the end of time. It is this anticipatory nature of the Season of Advent that compels us to meditate on **LAST THINGS FIRST**...Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell.

The LAST THINGS FIRST theme is most evident in the Collect for Advent Sunday (*Book of Common Prayer, Page 90*). Put into modern English...

*GOD HELP US TO STOP BEHAVING BADLY...KEEP US FROM DOING THINGS WE TRY TO HIDE FROM YOU...HELP US INSTEAD TO DO THINGS WE WANT PEOPLE TO SEE...THINGS JESUS TEACHES SO WHEN HE COMES BACK TO JUDGE THOSE ALIVE...AND THOSE WHO HAVE DIED...WE MAY BE READY AND ABLE TO SEE YOU IN HEAVEN. (***)*

The Rubric (italicized instructions) following the Collect directs us to...*SAY THIS COLLECT EVERY DAY UNTIL CHRISTMAS*...leaving no doubt in our minds we are to take the Collect seriously...**IT'S TIME TO GET OUR LIVES IN ORDER**...now...not later!

Most of us would rather not think about Last Things First. Getting ready for Christmas seems like a better idea. However...we can be certain we shall all face death...we shall all face judgment...heaven is something we hope for and have yet to experience...hell is the alternative to heaven.

The Season of Advent is ultimately about getting ready...preparing our hearts, minds and souls...to welcome the Jesus of the Manger on Christmas Day...the same Jesus of the Palm Sunday story of the Advent Sunday Gospel...who set the stage for what was to follow...and at his departure at the Ascension...promised he would return.

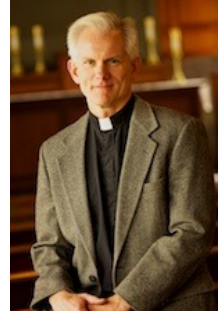
How do we get ready for his return...do what Saint Paul tells us to do in the Advent Sunday Epistle...get rid of dark and destructive behavior...embrace the Light that is Jesus.

Father Craig Looney+

(*** from Father John Altberg's Advent I – 2013 Sermon)

BISHOP SCARLETT TO VISIT...

Our Guest Celebrant and Preacher on 16 December...The Third Sunday in Advent...will be The Right Reverend Stephen C. Scarlett...Bishop Ordinary for the Diocese of the Holy Trinity...and Rector of Saint Matthew's Anglican Catholic Church in Newport Beach CA.



This is Bishop Scarlett's first visit to Saint Joseph Parish in a number of years. He is very much looking forward to meeting the parishioners. Bishop Scarlett arrives Friday afternoon and will meet with the Vestry Saturday morning.

There will be a potluck brunch in Young-Wheeler Hall following the Sunday Parish Mass. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Narthex.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS...

The Father's Love offers daily verses from Scripture and thoughtful meditations by Dutch Roman Catholic priest and author, Father Henri J.M. Nouwen (1932-1996).



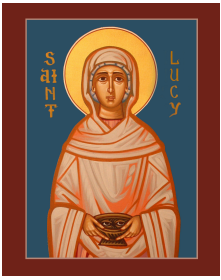
Journey into the Light includes daily Scripture, meditations and a short prayer. This booklet by Lutheran Pastor Susan M. Lang, includes a "Guiding Light" section after each devotion, which the author hopes will "give us pause for deeper reflection and action to engage in as we traverse the days ahead".

2019 ORDO KALENDARS...



2019 Ordo Kalendar conforming to the *Book of Common Prayer (1928)* and *Anglican and American Missals* will be available following the 9:00 AM Parish Mass on Advent Sunday, 2 December. We will have a limited quantity of Kalendar available this year; please take only one. There is no charge for the Kalendar.

WINTER EMBER DAYS...



The Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after 13 December (Saint Lucy's Day) are the Winter Ember Days. Ember Days are four separate sets of three days in the same week, which occur roughly at the beginning of the Four Seasons.

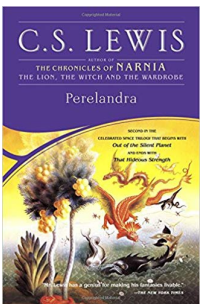
Ember Days were introduced into the Church as special days of fasting, abstinence and prayer...to thank God for his gifts of nature, to teach us to use them in moderation and to reach out and help the needy. The word "ember" comes from the Latin "*quattuor anni tempora*" (the "four seasons of the year").

Prior to the reforms made by the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in the 16th Century...13 December was the Winter Solstice and longest night of the year. Saint Lucy's Day (the proper name Lucy comes from the Latin *lucia*...the feminine form of *lux*...meaning *light*) and signals the approach of Christmas and Christ...the Light of the World.

Gradually...the Ember Days lost their association with agriculture and today they are special days of prayer and fasting for the increase in vocations to the priesthood. Ordinations sometimes take place on the Ember Days. There is a great need for dedicated and pastoral clergy. In the Collect for the Ember Days, we ask Almighty God to "put it into the hearts of many men to offer themselves for this ministry." (*Book of Common Prayer, Page 260*)

BOOK REVIEW

BY REBEKAH SHAPIRO...



What would the world have looked like if Adam and Eve had not given in to the serpent's temptation? *Perelandra* is C.S. Lewis' meditation on that question. It is the middle book in his "Space Trilogy." (The others are *Out of the Silent Planet* and *That Hideous Strength*.) It could be called a theological adventure novel. It features Ransom, who spends the school year teaching at a university and the summers being kidnapped to other planets. On those other planets, he encounters old enemies, new friends, strange beasts, and other tests of his physical, and more importantly his moral strength and courage. It is not a "spoiler" to say that the end of the book is Lewis' beautiful description of what the world might have looked like without Original Sin, and therefore what the world will look like when it is fully redeemed.

Perelandra by C.S. Lewis is available from the San Mateo County Libraries in both print and audio versions, both in physical and internet-download copies, and from bookstores.

EVERY-MEMBER CANVASS...



Every-Member Canvass letters will be mailed out during the week of 14 December. Please give prayerful thought and consideration when making your 2019 Pledge. If you have never made a pledge to the Parish...this is your opportunity to make a "New Year" resolution consistent with the Advent themes of starting over. Saint Joseph Parish depends on the generosity of its parishioners to meet its financial obligations. Please return your signed and dated pledge card to the Parish Office by Sunday 13 January 2019.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS...



Contributions toward the purchase of Christmas flowers to decorate the High Altar and Church must be received in the Parish Office by Sunday 16 December. Christmas Flower envelopes are available...please indicate your intention on the envelope (in memory of...in thanksgiving for...etc.).

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE...



MONDAY 24 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS EVE
7:00 PM – SUNG MASS AND SERMON

TUESDAY 25 DECEMBER CHRISTMAS DAY
9:00 AM – LOW MASS AND SERMON

THE TWELFTH NIGHT...



The Epiphany, or the Manifestation Christ to the Gentiles (*Book of Common Prayer, Page 107*) celebrates the "striking appearance" of Jesus to the Gentile, or non-Jewish world, represented by the Wise Men being led to Bethlehem by the star. The Eve of the Epiphany is called the "Twelfth Night".

Within Western Christianity...Epiphany concludes the liturgical Season of Christmas. Epiphany is also called Little Christmas, Theophany and Three Kings Day. There are many customs associated with Epiphany and in some countries it is a national holiday.

Because Epiphany, 6 January 2019, falls on a Sunday...we will have a potluck brunch in Young-Wheeler Hall following the 9:00 AM Parish Mass. Discussion Group will not meet. Please sign up on the sheet provided.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING...



The Annual Parish Corporation Meeting (APCM) will be held on Sunday 27 January 2019 immediately following the 9:00 AM Parish Mass. Members of the Parish who are current on their 2018 Pledge and have made a Pledge for 2019 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

During the meeting we will review and approve Minutes of the 2018 APCM, hear reports from the Rector, Senior and Junior Wardens and Treasurer. We will review and approve a Budget for 2019...and elect new Vestry members.

A short Vestry Meeting will follow at which the Rector will appoint a Senior Warden and the Vestry will elect officers. Coffee and fellowship time will follow the meeting. Discussion Group will not meet.

CALL PRIMROSE...



Thanks to all who contributed to the Thanksgiving Fill-a-Box/Feed-a-Family program. We delivered 15 boxes to CALL.

During December we are collecting items from CALL's "Most Needed List". Please bring any of the following items to church on Sunday and we will deliver them to CALL:

CANNED/DRY GOODS...Macaroni and Cheese, Pasta, Canned Vegetables, Hearty Soups/Stews (low-sodium varieties), Chili with or without Meat, Canned Fruit.

TOILETRIES...Tooth Brushes, Tooth Paste, Shampoo, Conditioner, Diapers (Sizes 5 & 6), Pull-ups.

Please: **NO GLASS BOTTLES OR JARS!**

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK...



Saint Joseph Parish has a Facebook page and it was recently updated with photos of Archbishop Mark Haverland's visit to the parish on Whitsunday and our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Father Looney reports recent activity includes 29 "likes" and no "dislikes". He requests our readers not use Facebook to communicate with him directly. He prefers you contact him by phone at the Parish Office or in an emergency on his cell phone.



A PRAYER FOR PARISH GROWTH

O GOD, WHO KNOWEST THE NEED OF ALL THY CREATURES, AND DOST BESTOW THE FAVOUR OF THY GRACE ALIKE UPON THE HUMBLE AND THE GREAT; BE WITH US IN ALL OUR ENDEAVORS DEVOTED TO THY SERVICE, AND GRANT US, WE BESEECH THEE, SUCH INCREASE OF NUMBERS AND OF MEANS AS WILL SECURE THIS HOUSE OF PRAYER TO THE WORSHIP AND GLORY OF THY SON, OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, WHO LIVETH AND REIGNETH WITH THEE AND THE HOLY GHOST, ONE GOD, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS – 9:00 AM SUNG MASS & SERMON
COFFEE HOUR & DISCUSSION GROUP

WEEKDAYS/HOLY DAYS AS ANNOUNCED

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE BY APPOINTMENT

THE REVEREND FATHER CRAIG LOONEY, RECTOR

THE CONTINUATION OF ANGLICANISM: We affirm that the Church of our fathers, sustained by the most Holy Trinity, lives yet...are determined to continue in the Catholic Faith, Apostolic Order, Orthodox Worship and Evangelical Witness of the traditional Anglican Church.



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