



Hamilton Diocesan Council
of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Care for our Common Home

ADVENT 2019 - Part 1



Dear Sisters of the League:

Advent is our journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as we wait in patient anticipation for the holiest of all nights - Christmas - the birth of Jesus Christ.

During our four Advent Sunday liturgies we experience the coming of Jesus with hope, light, and joy.

I have prepared an Advent reflection, that includes a link to a recording of an Advent Taize "Wait for the Lord"; followed by two Advent prayers that I hope you find helpful in preparing your hearts and homes for the coming of Jesus.

I also prepared a teaching, which I plan to share with you at the mid-point of Advent. Part 2 of my Advent reflection is an introduction and invitation to pray in a special way the "Great Advent", which refers to the last seven days of Advent.

It is my sincere hope that you will find peace, love and joy during the season of Advent and Christmas.

Blessings and Hugs,
Teresa DiFalco, Hamilton Diocesan First Vice President / Spiritual Development Chair

Advent Reflection

Advent is the season of anticipation and waiting for the birth of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Can you imagine the anticipation the Blessed Virgin Mary felt, waiting for the birth of the Christ Child? The longing she had to cradle her baby in her arms and look upon his precious radiant face.

Humans love the thrill of anticipation. Our faith is based on the anticipation of “waiting on the Lord” and His promise to us of his coming and life eternal with him.

Our Catholic faith is filled with wondrous miracles, captivating stories, and profound traditions, which include Advent. Our Advent practices help us to prepare our hearts and homes for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, just as the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph did.

Mary prepared her heart and a way for the Lord, by giving herself completely to God’s will, and her womb became the blessed home for our Savior for nine months before his birth.

Our Catholic Advent practices help us live closer to Christ, just as Mary did as the Mother to Jesus. These Catholic Advent practices help teach the doctrine of redemption and develop a sense of generosity toward God.

Despite repeating these same traditions year after year, the excitement and anticipation remain.

Do you ever wonder why that is?

It all comes down to what humans long for the most, which is love. A pure, unconditional, merciful and abundant love that only God our Creator can give. It is a gift that we never tire to long for and receive. It is a gift that goes beyond our ability to fully comprehend and appreciate. We go to great lengths on a daily basis to help prepare ourselves to be deserving of God’s love, as we wait for the Lord in constant anticipation.

God became like us, so that we can become like God. As sons and daughters of God, we can live for eternity in an intimate communion of love in, through and with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Advent leads us to God’s love and to the promise God has made to each of us. God’s promise becomes a reality for us on the Holiest of nights - *Christ-Mass*.

During the Advent and Christmas season, Christians around the world pause to recall the glorious Nativity and birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. On Christmas Eve, the world stands still in silence, the heavens open and the Angels sing Glory to God in the Highest, as God gifts the world with His only Begotten Son - Jesus Christ - with the Christian proclamation that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The whole world is invited to begin anew. Love is born on Christmas and the whole world can be Born Again in Christ.

The Catholic Church Liturgical Calendar begins anew as well as Advent begins each new Liturgical Year.

Starting anew, is our opportunity to prepare our hearts and homes, through prayer, forgiveness, and being kind, loving and “welcoming” towards each other.

The Church encourages and invites us to participate at weekday Masses during Advent, for in the Eucharist we find the source and goal of our Advent preparation: Christ Himself, whose sacrifice reconciles us with God.

Let’s ask ourselves - Does God’s love not deserve the same amount of time, effort and preparation that we give to prepare our homes to “welcome” family and friends?

As we prepare for Christmas through the traditions and celebrations of Advent, by filling our parish and homes with Advent and Christmas symbols, such as the Advent wreath, a manger, a Christmas tree, banquets of food and cheer, and Advent and Christmas hymns; let us call to mind the true reason behind all of this, and let us embrace the most precious of Christmas gifts, the gift of our Father’s merciful and unconditional love for each of us. A love that we are reminded of, not only at Christmas and Easter, but every time we gather in God’s name and receive the body and blood of Christ through Holy Communion. It is the ultimate gift that keeps on giving!

Our purpose in life on this earth is to grow, develop, and be strengthened through our own experiences. The scriptures tell us in one simple phrase how to do this - “wait upon the Lord”. In the scriptures wait means to hope, to “anticipate”, and to trust, just as Mother Mary did. To hope and trust in the Lord requires faith, patience, humility, meekness, long-suffering, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end.

May we wait upon the Lord by pressing forward as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ and members of our Catholic Church and Sisterhood within the Catholic Women’s League of Canada. May we remember to say in our prayers “Thy will be done,” and anticipate our return to God with grace and honour.

The following is a link to an Advent Taize “Wait for the Lord” that I recorded for you to chant along with before praying one of both of the following Advent prayers: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UQqRIgY7ZrREtAJD67-_FRnqC3NZEVBV/view?usp=sharing

ADVENT PRAYERS

My hidden Lord Jesus, I love You and thank You with profound gratitude for uniting Yourself with fallen humanity. When You first entered into this world, You remained hidden for nine months in the immaculate womb of Your Blessed Mother. She carried You, body and blood, soul and divinity, within the sanctuary of her body. She also carried You within her heart as a result of her perfect love for You and her perfect obedience to the will of the Father.

Precious Lord, as I embrace this Advent Season, please open my eyes to see the great value and blessing of Your Incarnation. Help me to discover Your hidden presence in this world and within my own soul. I desire to see, understand and experience the profound effects that Your Incarnation has on my life and I desire to receive those effects more fully this Advent. May I become a sanctuary in which You dwell so that I, like Your dear Mother, may bring Your presence into the world.

My loving Jesus, I choose You, this Advent, as my King and my God. I abandon myself to You and seek to put all my trust in Your tender care. Draw me close to You and free me from my sin so that I may love You with a pure and holy heart.

Mother Mary, as You carried your dear Son in your immaculate womb, you also carried Him in your heart. Pray for me, this Advent, that I may surrender myself to the will of the Father in imitation of you. You said "Yes" to all that God asked of you and never hesitated to fully embrace His divine will. Pray that I may imitate your perfect example so as to share a deeper union with you and your divine Son.

Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus!
Amen.

My little Lord Jesus, I love You and thank You for this Advent season. Please help me to understand all that You have done for me. Your loving mother held You in her heart and brought You into this world. Help me to do the same.

My loving Jesus, I choose You, this Advent, as my King and my God. Draw me close to You and help me to see my sins so that I can change the things that You want me to change.

Mother Mary, pray for me this Advent so that I may do all that God wants me to do. You said "Yes" to all that God asked of you. Please pray for me that I may do the same.

Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, Lord Jesus, come!
I love You, Jesus.
Amen

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