

December 22 – 24, 2019

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Light three purple candles and one pink candle.

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin will conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.” — Is. 7:10–14

The Fourth Week of Advent is just three days. Our eyes are on Christmas: the parties, the gifts, and food, but let us take this time to prepare for Christ's coming.

The story of Jesus' birth in Matthew centers on Joseph, Mary's husband and the foster father of Jesus. He is a dreamer which leads to both danger and salvation: after learning of Mary's pregnancy Joseph could have charged Mary with adultery or divorced her, which he planned to do, until he was visited by an angel in a dream.

The messenger tells Joseph not be afraid: Mary was conceived through the Holy Spirit, and her child will be a savior for the people. That is quite a responsibility for Joseph and Mary: at great risk, they would raise a child whose promise of salvation threatens the religious and government establishments.

For Joseph, his faith and reliance on the message was absolute and his future purpose in life would be shaped by that dream. Jesus would be safe in his care.

Today we live among “Dreamers”: young people brought to the U.S. as children, raised as Americans, but without legal status. At great risk they have identify themselves as Dreamers seeking legal status as they pursue their education and careers goals as they and their families, contribute their intelligence, hard work, and enthusiasm to this country.

As Advent comes to a close, honor Joseph and the power of his dream by supporting and advocating for the Dreamers of our generation.

Let Us Pray

Lord Jesus let your Spirit light my actions and give me the strength to follow what Your Word has made me see. Make me, like Mary, your Mother, not only to listen, but also to put the Word into action. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity
Immigration Ministry
Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653

We have been seeking compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform since 2005. In this 14th year of the journey seeking legislative shelter, may we accompany and welcome our immigrant sisters and brothers through prayer, reflection, and action. Take legislative action at justiceforimmigrants.org.

First Week of Advent

Give a gift of prayer for migrants and refugees:

That we may open our hearts to welcome migrants, we pray...

That we may work for compassionate immigration reform, we pray...

Second Week of Advent

Join the immigration reform Posada (seeking legislative shelter) on December 13, 2019 at 7 a.m. at 101 West Congress Parkway / Ida B. Wells Parkway (visit catholicsandimmigrants.org for details) or organize a Simbang Gabi, a Filipino custom.

Third Week of Advent

Stand with others by giving honor to Mary — Our Lady of Guadalupe or supporting advocacy activities at justiceforimmigrants.org.

Fourth Week of Advent

Join the prayer vigil at the Broadview Detention Center, 1930 South Beach Street, Broadview, on Fridays at 7:15 a.m. or pray in solidarity with those being deported.

Follow us on Facebook:

facebook.com/office.for.immigrant.affairs/

Visit: catholicsandimmigrants.org

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



IMMIGRATION MINISTRY

ADVENT REFLECTIONS 2019



December 1 – 7, 2019

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Light one purple candle.

“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know when your Lord will come.” — Mt. 24:37–44

Advent is a time of anticipation and transformation. Beyond preparation for Christmas, Advent is preparation for life. Just as many immigrants have made plans in case they are caught up in a surprise raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), so are we called by today's Gospel: “So too you must be prepared, for at an hour you don't expect, the Son of Man will come.” (Mt. 24:44) We await the arrival of God's presence, knowing that we are imperfect, but working to achieve a level of perfection tempered by our continued life of study, prayer, and acts of loving kindness.

Today's first reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah contains one of the most famous statements of hope and transformation:

“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another; nor shall they train for war again.” (Is. 2:4b) This verse, in a slightly different translation, is engraved on one of the outside walls at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, and has been inspiration for songs, poetry and artwork.

In our own times, we say, “They shall turn the jails into halls of welcoming and the children's cages into playgrounds. Nations shall not jail and terrorize those seeking asylum and we shall learn to learn to love, not hate, our neighbors throughout the world.”

This Advent, at this time of new beginnings, let us transform darkness into light and pessimism into action and hope.

Let Us Pray

Christ Jesus, may we repair our world and transform our hearts into places of loving justice, worthy of your coming, this Advent and throughout the year. In your name we offer this hope and prayer. Amen.

December 8 – 14, 2019

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Light two purple candles.

“Welcome one another as Christ welcomed you, for the Glory of God.” — Rom. 15:4–9

Our Gospel readings for this week and the next, center on the life and ministry of John the Baptist. Although John was the son of a Temple priest who, because of his father's work, would have grown up near the city of Jerusalem, the site of the Temple and the seat of King Herod's government, John lived a rugged life in the Judean wilderness, near the Jordan River. People flocked to the river to be baptized by John in order, as the Gospel text says, to acknowledge their sins, to repent, and then live a new life. John was a self-created “stranger,” and an excellent example of how we often learn most from those who are the most different from ourselves, not those we most resemble.

The Temple ritual of the time centered on particular animal sacrifices as a way to ask God's forgiveness, while John was demanding personal confession and repentance, which was also part of Jesus's preaching and ministry.

In our time, as we acknowledge how we often treat the stranger and the immigrant and the refugee in our midst, may we be aflame with the Holy Spirit, to convert our doubt and inaction to that energy of faith that can transform our world and bring us to new understandings of what risks we need to take change the hearts and souls of others.

Let Us Pray

Loving God, as John the Baptist cried out in the wilderness, may we be the voices in our time, calling for justice and confession of when we missed the mark and sinned against those who need our help the most. This we ask in the name of Jesus, who saves and redeems us all. Amen.

December 15 – 21, 2019

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Light two purple candles and one pink candle.

“Make your hearts firm, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.” — Rom. 15:4–9

As we enter the third week of Advent, our first two readings for this Sunday (Is. 35:1–6a, 10; Jm. 5:7–10), as well as our Psalm give us hope that the Kingdom of God is at hand and that justice will reign for all. Alas, God's time is different from our human calculations, and the world will only be truly transformed when we become the voice of God, joined to our actions of salvation and justice.

In today's Gospel (Mt. 11:2–11), which the story of John the Baptist in prison because of his attacks on the government and his followers are confused whether they should become disciples of Jesus. They approach Jesus, who recounts for them the miracles he had performed and suggests they share this news with John, whom he praises as the greatest of all prophets, for he prepared the way for Jesus' ministry.

We are all messengers of God's promise as fulfilled in Jesus, and it is our responsibility to preach, to teach and to bring prophetic justice to our world. We are at a time when our immigrant communities are in peril because of a general hostility by acts of hatred.

Like John the Baptist, it is our responsibility to cry out from the wilderness and the city gates; from the pews in our parishes and the halls of Congress and beyond. This is not only because we are asking for equity and mercy, but because the Word of God calls for deep justice and a transformation, for which Jesus called, of hate into love and selfishness into generosity.

Let Us Pray

Oh God whose voice rises above all human words and self-centered preoccupations, may we truly listen to your message and direct our lives to do your will and bring your Kingdom to all the earth. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who walks with all who are in peril and asks us all to follow in his path. Amen.