



"They are trees planted by streams of water; they bear fruit; their leaves do not wither; in all that they do they prosper." Ps 1:3

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The Theme for 2013: "LIVE BY FAITH" *Romans 1:17*

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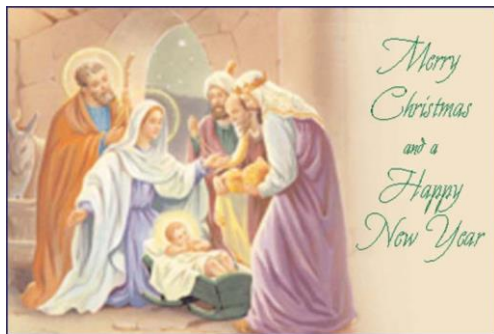
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ADVENT-CHRISTMAS

Advent usually starts four Sundays before Christmas, during which we Christians are expected to prepare our hearts, minds, and spirits, to celebrate the birth of Christ. Advent is a penitential season, and also marks the beginning of the liturgical year of the church.

The word *Advent* comes from the Latin '*advenio*', "to come to," and in Greek, '*Parousia*' which refers to the second coming of Christ. This refers, first of all, to our celebration of Christ's **birth at Christmas**; second, to the coming of Christ into our lives through the grace and the **Sacrament of Holy Communion**; and finally, to **His Second Coming at the end of time**. Priests wear purple vestments, and the "Gloria" is omitted during Mass.

When someone important is expected to come to our house, we prepare ourselves and our house so well, we tidy things, remove all unwanted

things and present our best in order to impress our visitor.

Before we look at Advent let us look at certain facts.

History is full of men who have claimed that they came from God or that they are gods, or that they bore a message from God. An automobile company, a phone company or any other company, before they launch a new product they advertise (pre-announce), they promote by giving all the benefits of their new product.

If God sent anyone for Himself, He would surely pre-announce – How He would be born? where He would be born? where He would live? how He will die? If God had not done this, there would have been many imposters. No other person's coming was pre-announced, in such a detailed manner, except for Jesus.

We know that we can see a galaxy, which is about 2½ million light-years away with our unaided eyes, if we go into the suburbs on a clear evening. When we ponder the distance of a “light year” and know how immense a galaxy is, we realize how great our creator is.

It is believed that there are close to 100-400 BILLION stars in a galaxy and there are billions of such galaxies. Please read **Col 1:13-22**, which tells us, how great Lord Jesus is.

It is sad, that this great God comes to our midst and we accept Him not (**Jn 1: 10-12**). He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God;

Others came to live – He came to die - He presented, not only as a teacher, but a saviour. The Holy Bible predicted the virgin birth – Prophecy of **Isaiah 53**, about the patient sufferer, the servant of the lord, who will lay down His life.

4000 BC: Adam and Eve receive the prophecy that the Messiah (Jesus) would be born of a woman. **Genesis 3:15** – “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall

bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

700 BC: Isaiah prophesies that Jesus’ mother would be a virgin who conceived by a miracle and that Jesus would be God who became a man. **(Isaiah 7:14)** – “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”. We see the Fulfillment: in the N T.

700 BC: Micah prophesies that Jesus would be born in the town of Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 – “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days [eternity].”

Our preparations, therefore, should have all three comings in mind. We need to prepare our souls to receive Christ worthily.

First Fast, then Feast – that is why Advent has traditionally been known as a "little Lent." As in Lent, Advent should be marked by increased prayer, fasting, and good works.

We need to slow us down from our chaotic parties, shopping’s, goodies and open our ears to God’s quiet voice, let us allow God to shape us. We are to make time for meditation, prayer, scripture study. Ordinary people like us, not just “spiritual superstars,” can accomplish setting aside a little time each day to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child.

(Lk 1:26-38) the greetings/announcement of the birth of Jesus to Mary, by angel Gabriel is parallel to Zechariah of the birth of John Baptist “Full of Grace” this is the only place an angel addresses someone with the title. The Holy Spirit did not come on the son, but Mary -- God wanted a human body and Mary complied.

Power of the most high will over shadow you **(1 Kings 8:10)** *Angel Gabriel, according to Jews was of the highest rank – announces the hour of Salvation to Daniel (Dan 8:16 & 9:21).*

However, the Church allows at halfway point of Advent, i.e. the 3rd Sunday of Advent known as Gaudete Sunday, (gau der ter) because "Gaudete" ("Rejoice") is the first word of the entrance antiphon at that Mass. On that Sunday, priest is likely to wear rose vestments-a color that still reminds us of the penitential purple, but also has a lightness and joy to it, reminding us that the Saviour is coming.

Practically everyone in the world knows about Christmas but hardly half of the world knows who Christ is. We have emphasized more on Christmas than Christ

Many of us confess, during Lent and Christmas, we should first pray for a gift/fruit of repentance. We should not only be sorry for the wrong we did, but we should hate the sin.

2 Cor 7: 10) for Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.

One of the main reason, why there is no genuine repentance is, because we have not understood, what Christ did on the Cross of Calvary. God's love to man is Christmas – His love in action for all who believe.

Our Lord Jesus came as a helpless baby in Bethlehem and now is playing the role of an advocate, pleading our case to the Father. There will be a time He will come as a Judge and it may be too late for us to run to Him, as He will come as a judge and not as an advocate.

MAKE CHRISTMAS HAPPEN TO SOMEONE WHO IS LESS FORTUNATE.

We not only find peace,
but we also find the Prince of Peace.
We not only find righteousness,
but we also find the Righteous One.
We not only find counsel,
but we also find the Counselor.
We not only find wonders,
but we also find the Wonderful One.
We not only find spiritual food,

but we also find the Bread of Life.
We not only find provision,
but we also find the Shepherd of our souls.
We not only find salvation,
but we also find the Savior.
We not only find the Kingdom,
but we also find the King.

- *Henry Sanjivi*

THE SECOND CHRISTMAS

More than two thousand years ago the first Christmas took place in a manger where God sent His only son Jesus to save the human race. Jesus was the only person in the entire world to ever be pre-announced, His coming was announced in the prophecies of the Old Testament and He fulfilled every one of them. Not only were the Jews expecting the birth of a Great King, but even the Greeks, Plato and Socrates also spoke of the Logos and the Universal Wise Man “yet to come”; even Confucius spoke of “the Saint” to come. What separates Jesus from all men is that He was expected; even the Gentiles had a longing for a deliverer, or redeemer. This fact alone distinguishes Him from all other religious leaders. A second distinguishing fact is that once He appeared, He struck history with such impact that He split it in two, dividing it into two periods: one before His coming (BC), the other after it (AD).

Christmas is a time of celebrating the birth of Jesus but as we look around us the Christian world is more interested in celebrating Jesus’ birthday where emphasis is given more to the secular than the spiritual.

What do I mean by “THE SECOND CHRISTMAS”; it is when Jesus is born in an individual’s heart, every human heart is searching for solace which the world cannot give. All humanity is seeking the answer to the confusion, the moral sickness, the spiritual emptiness that oppresses the world. All mankind is crying out for guidance, for comfort, for peace; we live in the “age of anxiety”. For generations we have been running like

frightened children grasping at every passing straw and even as we clutch it, it disappears.

Jesus is the answer to the world. He is the way, the truth and the life. When we allow Him to be born in our hearts and to live there all through our lives here on earth, it is only then we will experience the Second Christmas every day in our lives. For this we have to empty ourselves wholly so that the Holy Spirit consumes us and directs us in our lives. There will be trials in our lives but the inner strength God gives us to endure and conquer is amazing.

The only person in history who was able to choose where He was to be born, chose a stable but now He waits to be born in a human heart, for there is a room there. Let every heart prepare room, for a Second Christmas.

Thou didst leave thy throne
And thy kingly crown
When thou camest to the earth for me
O come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for thee. (E.S.Elliott)

- *Philip Balfour*

OUR DEVOTION TO MARY

(Continuation...)

The Power of the Rosary

Fr Gabriel Amorth, Chief Exorcist of the Vatican narrates that one day a colleague of his heard the devil saying during an exorcism, “Every Hail Mary is like a blow on my head. If Christians knew how powerful the Rosary was, it would be my end.” One of the most amazing miracles in history occurred at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, in Hiroshima, Japan. At that time the Americans dropped the first atomic bomb, and it landed just eight city blocks from the Jesuit church of Our Lady of the Assumption. A

half million people were killed instantly when the bomb hit, and homes and buildings for miles around were instantly leveled. Yet the Jesuit church and rectory as well as the four Jesuit priests inside it were undamaged and unhurt. Why? Because the priests prayed the Rosary daily.

When the Blessed Mother appeared in Fatima she expressly asked for prayers for the conversion of Russia and that she also prophesized that this nation would endanger the peace and security of the entire world if her words were ignored. In the third apparition on July 13, 1917, she warned: If my wishes are fulfilled, Russia will be converted and there will be peace. If not, Russia will spread her errors throughout the world, promoting wars and persecution of the Church. The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, and various nations will be annihilated.

The West seemed in danger of a Soviet takeover. But Pope John XXIII had read the third secret of Fatima, and so he had authorized the Bishop of Leiria (Fatima) to write to all the bishops of the world, inviting them to join with pilgrims of Fatima on the night of October 12-13, 1960, to pray the Rosary for peace and for Russia's conversion. About a million pilgrims responded to the request and spent the night outdoors in a bone-chilling rain before the Blessed Sacrament praying the Rosary. And in addition to this, over 300 dioceses throughout the world joined them. The Rosaries and sacrifices of millions obtained another astonishing intervention. For that same night the Soviets' new long-range A-bomb missile unexpectedly blew up during a test, killing three hundred top military leaders and scientists. This set back Russia's nuclear program twenty years.

All these wonders, however, were surpassed on March 25, 1984, when Pope John Paul II called for a Rosary crusade because of the grave danger to world peace at that time. In response to his request, a major "Rosaries for peace" crusade was launched by the Blue Army and other Marian organizations. There was a magnificent response. And on May 13 1984, one of the largest crowds in Fatima history gathered at the shrine to pray the Rosary for peace. And that very day an explosion at the Soviets' Severomorsk Naval Base destroyed two-thirds of all the missiles stockpiled for the Soviets' Northern Fleet. The blast also destroyed the workshops needed to maintain the missiles as well as hundreds of scientists and

technicians. Western military experts called it the worst naval disaster the Soviet Navy had suffered since WW II.

Besides this, the Soviet Defense Minister, the mastermind behind the invasion plans, suddenly and mysteriously became seriously ill and then died in December of 1984. Four years later, during the night of May 12, 1988, as thousands prayed the Rosary at Fatima, another mysterious explosion wrecked the only factory that made the rocket motors for the Soviets' deadly SS 24 long-range missiles, which carry ten nuclear bombs each.

The Crown of Roses

The word Rosary means "crown of roses". Our Lady has shown her thorough approval of the name Rosary and has revealed to several people that each time they say a Hail Mary they are giving her a beautiful rose and each complete Rosary makes her a crown of roses. It means that every time someone says the Rosary devoutly one places a crown of 53 red roses and 5 white roses upon the heads of Jesus and Mary. The chronicle of St Francis mentions of a young friar, who had the praiseworthy habit of praying the Rosary every day before dinner. One day, for some reason he did not manage to say it. The refectory bell had already been rung when he asked the superior to allow him to say it before coming to the table, and having obtained his permission he withdrew to his cell to pray. After he had been gone a long time the Superior sent another friar to fetch him, and he found him in his room, bathed in a heavenly light facing Our Lady who had two angels with her. Beautiful roses kept issuing from his mouth at each Hail Mary; the angels took them one by one, placing them on Our Lady's head, and she smilingly accepted them. Finally two other friars who had been sent to find out what had happened to the first two saw the same lovely scene, and Our Lady did not go away until the whole Rosary had been said.

In conclusion, it is certain that no human being can obtain so many graces for us as this tender advocate who is so honored by God, not only as His beloved handmaid, but also as His true Mother. Mary has only to speak and her Son executes all. This was acknowledged by the devil himself to

St Dominic who had obliged him to speak by the mouth of a possessed person. He said: “A single sigh from Mary was worth more before God than the united prayers of all the saints.” Let us resolve to do three things: (1) Carry the Rosary (2) Recite the Rosary personally, and (3) Recite the Rosary in the family and group. As Queen of Heaven she prays ceaselessly that each of her spiritual children will be worthy of the mighty promises of her Divine Son. As one prayer puts it succinctly: “Mary, because you are God’s Mother so you can’t say you can’t. Because you are my mother so you won’t say you won’t. So you will; won’t you? Amen.”

- *Cyril John*

WINDOW THROUGH THE PAST WEEKS

27th Nov 2013 - Harry Rasquinha – ‘How I Lived the Theme 2013 – Live by Faith?’

In order to remain focused the remaining days of this year, all were encouraged to dwell on the question – “How I lived the Theme 2013” – Live by Faith – Rom 1:17, which is the shorter version of “**the righteous live by faith**”. Thought provoking questions were put like – ‘have I been, just, upright, virtuous, law-abiding?.. Is it reflected in right living, right relationships (with God and man), right thoughts, words and actions? “Can my family, neighbours and colleagues say that they see righteous and faithful person in me?”

Have you undergone the test of your faith? Have you been successful? Has God found you faithful? The test of faith can be in the form of crisis in life, (like loss of a dear one, loss of job, ill health, difficult relationship, hard time at work place, etc,..) or even persecution because of the faith you profess. But we are expected to remain faithful and rejoice even in these situations as said in the book of Habakkuk 3:17-19. Because tests are intended to discipline us, train us and purify us, just as gold and silver is purified in the furnace of fire (Wis 3:4-9). Therefore, let us not waste these opportunities but benefit from them as per the brotherly advice given in Jas 1:2-4.

TESTIMONIES – HOW I LIVED THE THEME

From the day the theme of 2013 was announced “ **live by faith**”, I took the challenge that I must sincerely do something to grow in faith. Faith comes by hearing the word / reading the word.

So I started memorizing the Psalms, before it was only Ps. 91 and Ps. 121 or Ps 23, but over these 11 months passed by, I have memorized nearly 27 Psalms. These psalms are wonderful prayers and praises to God. I pray these psalms every time I travel to the interiors. Now during my travel of 3 hours duration it is a joy and these Psalms keep me in the right spirit of peace and happiness. Before it was rosary and listening to hymns but now I have added Psalms as my prayers which uplifts me. Every time I learn a new Psalm, I make it a point to pray that Psalm before I hit the bed as it helps me to make sure that I have memorized it thoroughly.

What I received through the word, I could give to others. What I experience, I can share with others. One of our sisters was feeling very low and crying, so I prayed with her I shared with her the peace and strength I receive from psalms and I quoted the Ps.27. I made her read and believe in the Word. And she did that and overcame what she was undergoing. She was also able, with the strength she received, to carry on with the work which was assigned to her in the community. All praise and glory to our Lord!

- *Renato Gomes*

I had faith, but I was not living my faith, so that was a challenge for me this year, because the Word of God says Faith without action is useless. And God brought to me a lot of opportunities where I could exercise my faith and live it.

My daughter Serene used to constantly get these attacks of cough, every 15 days she contracted this cough with fever and was compelled to take medication. One day while praying, I was led to exercise my faith in this area by praying unceasingly. I prayed constantly that the Lord may heal Serene of this regular attack and God answered my prayer. She did not get

this attack for the next 2 months. The attacks do come but after long intervals, praise God.

The most important area that God wanted me to live my faith was, at home. I never gave my wife a helping hand at home and again here God reminded me about my faith without actions. I had to show my faith in everything. I decided to lend my wife a helping hand at home and amazingly this led me to indulge this time also, to praying for others or hum some hymns while attending to the home work.

Another area that God dealt with in my life is, in disciplining my children. I was always afraid of hurting my children, but Jesus broke down that wall through Sir 30. He called me to be firm and discipline my children in the areas where they needed to be disciplined; having faith that God will take care of my relationship with the kids. Jesus has helped me to increase and strengthen my faith through my actions.

I continue to pray, that I must decrease and He must increase in me. Amen!

- Louis Ryan

**Wishing every member of
The Mary Immaculate Praise Community (MIPC)
& Your Families**



**THE CORE TEAM
&
THE OASIS MINISTRY**



PRAY THE 6.30 AM CALL



MIPC Prayer Meeting: Every Thursday at 8:00 pm in the Parish Hall, except on the second week of the month.

General Intercessory Meeting: Last Monday of every month at 8:00 pm.

Community Mass: Every Saturday at 9.00 a.m.