

ADVENT 2019



THE ASCENT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Fill us All with
Peace





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Dear Parishioners,

November 2019

ENFLAME ASCENSION! That is a simple, but powerful prayer to the Holy Spirit for an on-going transformation of our parish community. Following the theme from our recent Archdiocesan Enflame Convocation, we as active Catholics are challenged to continue our own spiritual growth and to transform others by witnessing and sharing our faith in family and community.

The Enflame Convocation first focused on Enflaming our Hearts. We are called not to be complacent Catholics but people on fire with the love of God and neighbor. Our hearts are enflamed as we welcome the Holy Spirit more fully into our lives. By Baptism we are immersed into personal relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Our spiritual life is about deepening these relationships through the Mass and the Sacraments, through reading the Scriptures, through regular personal prayer such as the rosary, Eucharistic Adoration, through faith centered relationships with others who are on the journey, through deepening our knowledge of the faith through spiritual reading and faith formation experiences. Becoming more actively engaged in the spiritual renewal of our minds and hearts leads to greater openness to the Holy Spirit and to a more vitalized spirituality.

Secondly, we are called to Enflame our Family. There is no question but that the family is under attack these days by everything from the social culture to the excessive busyness of our lives. Yet we all know that the family is the most essential relationship that we have. It is within the family that each person experiences life and love. It is within the family that parents as co-pastors of their domestic church form their children and future generations in prayer and in knowledge of the faith. It is within the family that the life in Christ is lived through daily interaction and loving care. Families are enflamed as they intentionally live the spirit of Jesus in their daily life including family prayer, meals and other times together, discussions on the faith and daily life, self-giving service to others.

Enflame our Community challenges our parish to become an ever more alive parish family through openness to the Holy Spirit. Enflaming our hearts and enflaming our families will necessarily bring about a transformation of our parish community. We will become more welcoming, more prayerful, more desirous of learning our faith, more powerful in service of others. A community enflamed with the heart of Christ will be ever more dynamically alive both internally and in sharing our faith.

The parishioners who attended the Archdiocesan Enflame Convocation are planning to share the talks and other experiences from that gathering with our parish community. Details about this gathering will be forthcoming in the bulletin and on-line. In the meantime pray that we can all be personally and communally enflamed with the life of the Holy Spirit.

God's blessings!
Fr. Tom



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

ENFLAME CONVOCATION

During the weekend of October 3-5th, thirty-five members of our Ascension parish family attended the Archdiocesan Convocation put on by Archbishop Naumann. With over 1,400 people in attendance, the workshop took place at the OP Convention Center where every parish in the Diocese was represented.

The goal of this gathering was to initiate and expand all facets of parish and Catholic life in our archdiocese. All were encouraged to go beyond the demands of "maintenance" to the challenging adventure of "mission".

Our hope is to concentrate our efforts at the parish level to further encounters with Christ and one another in an effort to enflame our hearts, homes and community with the Joy of the Gospel.



Look for more information in the coming months as our 35 delegates meet to develop a Parish Plan for Ascension that will light our hearts on fire and equip us to go out and proclaim the Gospel by our lives!

Keep an eye out for our Convocation banner on display in our Gathering Space.

We are to focus on three areas.
Enflame our: Hearts, Homes,
Community.



You all know me as Father Viet, but my full name is Quốc-Việt Minh Nguyễn. Quốc in Vietnamese means, the land of, the country of, or nation. So my first name Quốc-Việt basically, means, the land of Việt, the country of Việt, or the nation of Việt. Việt referring to Vietnam. Now traditionally, in Vietnam my name would be said as, Nguyễn Minh Quốc-Việt. I find that very appropriate in introducing myself because whenever someone ask me where my faith came from or how I grew up, I go back to my parents and my grandparents generation.



The first Catholic priest arrived in Vietnam in 1550. The Church continued to grow, especially under French colonial rule, until the communists began their conquest of Vietnam after World War II. My family is originally from the north, but when the country was divided into the communist north and the non-communist south in 1954, approximately 650,000 Catholic Vietnamese fled to the south because of the religious persecution. My parents each grew up in the south of Vietnam, but on April 30, 1975 when Saigon fell, my family – because of their history dealing with communism – knew they couldn't stay in the country, because of religious freedom. My parents told me, “We left Vietnam with nothing but our family and our faith in God.”

I was born on July 23, 1990 at Menorah Hospital in Kansas City Missouri. I grew up at Curé of Ars Parish in Leawood, from 3 year old preschool through 8th grade. (Monsignor Charles McGlinn was my only pastor growing up, until he retired.) I graduated from Rockhurst High School in 2008. Before coming back to Kansas to be ordained a priest, I spent 10 years in the Chicago area. I graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2012 and then spent the next six years at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake (Mundelein Seminary).

If you don't see me at church, I am either exercising or playing some kind of sport. I thoroughly love being with and around people, so much, that you might find me at nearby coffee shops reading or journaling. If you do, never hesitate to stop by and say hello. I am very happy to be able to serve you here at Church of the Ascension and look forward to meeting you.



Often I run into quite a bit of misunderstanding and confusion with regard to the Church's teaching and practice on marriage and civil divorce. Most likely much of this is due to the secular culture within which we live. It is often assumed that the civil government has the final say on marriage and divorce rather than that being Christ and His teaching as articulated in scripture and embodied in church teaching/practice.

First a word about marriage itself. As reflected in the first two chapters of Genesis, marriage between a man and a woman is part of God's plan for human well-being and for the future of society. Jesus reaffirms this very strongly and, according to St. Paul's teaching and Church tradition, raised marriage up to the level of being a special Sacrament, a living sign in which a baptized husband and wife are called to share not only human love, but also the love of God Himself. Ephesians 5:28-33. This is the tremendous dignity attached to that very human relationship of married love.

While divorce was commonly accepted among the Jews of His time, Jesus cites divorce as intrinsically contrary to God's plan for marriage. He further condemns marriage after divorce as a sinful act of adultery. (Read Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18) These are very strong teachings regarding the dignity and permanence of the marital commitment. The Church in her teachings regarding the permanence of the marriage covenant is reflecting faithfully the teaching of Jesus.

We know that not every marriage is made in heaven and sometimes the relationship can be so harmful and toxic that couples cannot continue to live as one especially in cases of serious abuse. Separation and even civil divorce may be a regrettable necessity. However, it is important to realize that a civil divorce does not break the marriage bond before God; it merely affects the civil dimensions of the marriage relationship. A couple presumed to be in a valid marriage before God is still obliged to the marriage commitment even after civil divorce. The State does not have the power to break or nullify what God has joined together. Hence we see the commandment about the moral wrong of remarriage after a divorce. That is why those who are divorced and have attempted a second marriage without a declaration of nullity are not spiritually prepared to share in Holy Communion. However, we do not stand in judgement, but in compassion and support for the healing of parties and relationships and return to Eucharistic Communion.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that there are serious problems in some marriages. One partner or both may find it necessary to pursue a civil divorce because of the legal effects. But the question then often surfaces: are the parties still bound to the marriage commitment? And the answer is YES unless there are serious reasons to question the validity of the marriage from its beginning. That is where a declaration of nullity by the Church may come into play.

Some marriages were begun on a good and strong foundation, but unfortunately went awry. Others, however, were based on a rather weak foundation with serious lacks in the ability or intention of the parties to enter into a true marriage before God. The process of seeking a declaration of nullity enables the couple and those who are acquainted with them to discern if the necessary qualities for a true marriage including ability to live a marriage relationship, freedom to make a commitment, and intention to permanence, procreative love and fidelity were present from the beginning. Often this discernment leads to the conclusion that though assumed to be a valid marriage, in fact the marriage was not valid from the beginning. It is important to note that this does not affect legitimacy of children since the presumption of marriage was there at that time. A declaration of invalidity of a particular marriage is NOT 'Catholic divorce' as it is sometime characterized. Divorce is the attempt to break a true marriage bond whereas a declaration of nullity is based on serious deficiencies in the marriage commitment from the beginning.

If you have found yourself in that very difficult and painful situation of having experienced marital breakdown, please realize that the People of God want to be with you in the midst of that reality. You are not rejected by the Church, but rather are a very special member perhaps in need of some special ministry and care. Please reach out to your parish priest or other persons to assist you during that very difficult time. If you have experienced civil divorce and wish to pursue the possibility of a declaration of nullity, once again reach out to your parish priest or staff member. We are here to help.

Jesus presents a very lofty and challenging vision of marriage, but He also pledges his grace and help to live out that commitment. Yet unfortunately too often one or even both parties may not embrace that vision and do not work to realize the true joys of married life. Know that the healing grace of Christ's love and mercy is there for all of us no matter what the challenges or difficulties may be. Healing and new life are always possible.

God's blessings always!
Father Tom



It has been a joy to serve the parish as a deacon. I wish to thank all parishioners for the kind reception given me in this role. Here is my brief bio: My wife, Connie and I have been parish members for twenty years. We have four children – all married. Three of our children and all 14 of our grandchildren are members of Ascension. Our fourth child, lives in Fairbanks, Alaska. I am a retired attorney. I was ordained as a permanent deacon in 2017.

So, what exactly is a deacon and what is their role in the Church? There are three orders of clergy in the Church: bishops, priests and deacons. Historically, deacons assisted bishops and priests especially in serving the poor.

Deacons are new to our Archdiocese and to our parish, but they have been around since the very beginning of the Church, where we read about them in the Acts of the Apostles. The Order of the Diaconate was discontinued after 500 years but was reinstated in 1968. Currently there are approximately 40 men serving as deacons in the Archdiocese and another 40 in formation. Twenty of those in formation are scheduled to be ordained in the Spring of 2020. Formation is a five-year program involving spiritual formation, academic study and pastoral training.

Note the term “permanent deacon”. It is to be distinguished from a transitional deacon to which every priest has also been ordained. A permanent deacon is just that. He will remain a deacon for life and will not transition to a priest.

Unlike priests, deacons are typically married – but they cannot marry or re-marry after their ordination. Deacons are ordained not to the priesthood but to service. Unlike a priest, he cannot consecrate the Eucharist or absolve sins. A deacon has a three-fold role to the Church: Charity in which he is of service to the community; Word, in which he proclaims the Gospel and preaches; and Liturgy where he assists at Mass, is an ordinary minister of the Eucharist and baptism, witnesses marriages, ministers at funeral services, and leads the community in prayer.

The word deacon is derived from the Greek, *Diakonia* – which is translated as “service”. The USCCB describes deacons, thusly: “Deacons are ordained as a sacramental sign to the Church and to the world of Christ, who came ‘to serve and not to be served.’”

Deacons answer directly to their bishop and the parish priest to whom they are assigned. Most deacons are assigned to serve in roles outside their parishes as well. The Archbishop assigned me to prison ministry. As such, I coordinate volunteers who serve in jail ministry and in prisons. Other deacons serve in other areas of charity such as: to the sick and dying in hospitals and hospices, counseling those addicted to drugs and alcohol, providing communion services at nursing homes and the homebound, helping to eliminate human trafficking, assisting the poor and the homeless, and other works of charity.

Being ordained a deacon is a humbling experience for which I am unworthy. I wish to thank Fr. Tom for allowing me to serve at Ascension, where, God willing, I hope to serve many more years.



Pro-Life Should Include Foster Care, Too

It wasn't until I became a foster parent that I realized how little my pro-life church, and perhaps every church, was contributing to curbing the modern orphan crisis of our time. And I understood why. I didn't get into foster parenting because I wanted it to be my life's work; I got into it for more-selfish reasons. I wanted to be a mother. After 15 years of infertility, foster parenting was likely my only hope because of my age, my husband's disapproval of private adoption, and just plain old time. I wanted to be a mother, now. My biological clock was done ticking.

Our journey with foster care began as an adopt-only desire. But after we took into care our first three-year old, who became our forever daughter, we could not be blind to what was happening all around us. Required training hours forced us to hear the horrific reality that over 400,000 children are "orphaned" via the foster-care system throughout the United States; over 100,000 of them are legally free for adoption. So we started accepting more children. Soon one became two, and then two became three, and I remember once we had seven children under the age of nine in our home at one time. I remember in that moment thinking about Mother Teresa. "I want the child. Please give me the child. I will accept any child." This urgent plea to protect children in the womb certainly extended beyond it, and in fact was likely critically tied to it.

As people of faith, we are called to be more pro-life, not less. And so I wondered why we had this crisis in America with foster children. I mean, if there are nearly 20,000 Catholic parishes and over 380,000 evangelical churches, how could it be so hard to make sure that 100,000 children had a forever home and that 400,000 children had a support system around them to give them everything they needed, until they didn't? Think about it. Among 400,000 churches, Catholic and Protestant combined, 400,000 children should be served. That's one child per church.

Think about it. Among 400,000 churches, Catholic and Protestant combined, 400,000 children should be served. That's one child per Church.

When I began adding to my family through foster care, there was a deafening silence from my local parish. While we were caring for over 15 children, ages newborn to ten years old, not once did my parish reach out to help with meals for my family; not once was I offered a few hours of babysitting so I could get a dozen other things completed that had been left undone while we cared for these babies; not once were we offered clothing or supplies to manage the variety of ages or circumstances that accompanied each placement. It was in these moments that I began to realize that while we are very good at raising our pro-life voices against abortion, we are really struggling to live out a truly whole-life culture, especially on the issues surrounding foster care. We have little awareness that this is indeed a crisis likely tied to our zeal and our passion to eradicate abortion.

F  **OSTER CARE**

It's not just the child's life that changes

RESPECT LIFE (CONTINUED)

We are there for those mamas who choose to listen to us and choose to protect the lives of their babies. We offer support, housing, supplies, financial assistance all throughout these pregnancies and maybe for the first six months, or even a year. But what next? What do we do when the stressed-out single mama with her third or fourth baby (whom we helped save) loses her job or can't make her rent, or can't buy diapers, or gets hooked up again with those friends who do drugs? How do we step in? How do we prevent those babies from becoming "orphaned" through the foster-care system? And what happens when they do? Because they do.

What are our churches doing to support the foster families in our pews? Could there be a foster-support ministry in the parish that helps with meals, tutoring, babysitting, respite care for evenings or weekends, collection of supplies, or mentoring for older foster children? Could existing ministries, such as pro-life or over-55 or teen ministries, come together to offer parents' nights out for busy couples, or mothers' days out for overscheduled mamas, free of charge? Could there be angel trees at other times besides Christmas that collect school supplies for school-aged foster children? Could the men's ministries do a drive for suitcases for the local foster-care association so children coming into care don't carry their only belongings around in a black garbage bag? Could teens or college students offer free tutoring to struggling elementary or middle-school students?



Every child deserves a family

I understand that not everyone is called to be a foster parent, but today's churches have a tremendous mission opportunity right here in our own communities. Not all church members are equipped to take on the daunting duties of daily care for kids affected by loss and trauma. But by God's design, we are all given talents and abilities that can support those who care for them, whether that be through our own financial means or through a myriad of other resources available to us through our churches. Scripture is quite clear on our obligation to help the orphans (James 1:27) and that He's given us different varieties of gifts and talents with which to serve (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

With roughly 400,000 children in foster care in the United States, the time is now for us to extend our pro-life mission to the children who are already here. With the help of the church and her communities of faith, these children can be part of homes and families that will give them the love and the care they have lost, yet so very much deserve. With help. With your help. With the church's help, we can solve the orphan crisis of our generation.





I love the Solemnity of Christ the King. Celebrated on the final Sunday of the liturgical year, I imagine the feast as sort of New Year's Eve celebration – the current year's way of “going out with a bang” before the next year takes its place. I envision it like an exclamation mark on the end of an impassioned sentence (a writing device that I cannot correct myself from over-using!).

For me, the Solemnity also invokes the memory of my conversion, which still simmers warm in my heart. For it was in the Parish of Christ the King in Little Rock, Arkansas, now almost 13 years ago, that my husband and I were received into the Catholic Church. The Solemnity of Christ the King reminds me of our then-parish community, which was loving, fervent, dynamic, and instrumental in our conversion process.

This Solemnity is a fairly recent addition to the liturgical calendar – at least by Catholic standards. Pope Pius XI instituted the Feast in 1925 to remind the faithful that Christ reigns as king over all things and for all time. “If to Christ our Lord is given all power in heaven and on earth; if all men, purchased by his precious blood, are by a new right subjected to his dominion; if this power embraces all men, it must be clear that not one of our faculties is exempt from his empire” (Pope Pius XI; *Quas Primas*, 33).

In overly-simplistic terms, the Solemnity of Christ the King invites us to encounter “Big Jesus” -- in full-scale power, strength, and beauty. It is like a liturgical Transfiguration – a mountain-top moment punctuating the year. Like Dorothy over the rainbow, technicolor permeates the sepia of daily life, and we are invited to encounter Christ in glory.

Spiritual seasons of intensely-felt glory, of Christ the King revealed, are very important in the telling and understanding of our stories. In my own story, Christ the King first revealed himself to me in my late teen years, when I was captivated by a sense of Jesus calling. Years later, when I first met my husband, Jesus drew his plans for us boldly, with the thick, quick strokes of love-at-first-sight that have never looked back or second guessed. Not long after that, Christ the King welcomed us into His Church (in the aforementioned, appropriately named parish!), despite all odds against our conversion. Still years later, God formed our family out of the dust of my infertility, through the miracle of twins – grown not in my womb, but in my heart. These are a few of the treasures of my love story, the high notes in the melody of Christ reigning in my life.

In some ways, I find myself drawn to the Solemnity of Christ the King in the same way that I gravitate toward these spiritual mountain tops – the palpable “God moments,” when the Divine cracks through the ordinary façade. But, at times I notice a particular tendency within myself. I crave or try to contrive spiritual consolation over aridity; I prefer the miraculous over the mundane; I seek to live in Oz rather than Kansas. Like St. Peter I want to linger in glory. I want to build monuments at the site of each Transfiguration (Lk 9:33), at the place of each encounter with Christ the King.

The Church in her soft, maternal way, reaches out and folds me back into myself. Through the gently rocking rhythm of feasting and fasting, through the carefully placed celebrations and preparations that comprise our liturgical year, she reminds me that the spiritual life is not “either-or,” but “both-and.”

CHRIST THE KING (CONTINUED)

The Feast of Christ the King, the final Sunday on the liturgical calendar, is wisely juxtaposed against the first Sunday of Advent, the first Sunday of the New Year. If the Solemnity of Christ the King is all about celebrating “Big Jesus,” then the season of Advent is all about adoring “Little Jesus.”

During Advent we are invited to encounter Jesus in utter humility – not as a man, or even as an infant, but as the tiniest form of human life, gestating in his mother’s womb. Unlike the booming tone of exclamation marks, he is as quiet as a whisper, so small he could easily be missed.

Jesus in Advent is not like the catchy melody of a love song, but more like the quietly repeating chords beneath the surface. He is perfect love, giving without forcing. He calls me quietly in the reprises, hiding himself in the Eucharist, in my family, and in my daily life. He does not make himself obvious; encountering him takes patience, repetition, and silence.

Advent-Jesus calls me in the seemingly mundane chores of my daily life – in the ordinary tasks and labored-love that my vocation requires. In nightly homework help, packed lunches, and folded laundry; he is present, although I often do not notice.

At times I experience his fluttering kicks, and I receive confirmation that he is gestating within my own heart. But more often I experience his presence through fatigue and morning sickness -- the necessary death-to-self that accompanies new life. I trust he is growing within me, even though I do not always feel him in the way I desire.

The mountain-top moments of the spiritual life are glorious to recall. Christ the King writes my story with sweeping plot twists and technicolor miracles. His feast day reminds me that he has power and command over all things at all times. But the reality is, the majority of my spiritual life is not penned in bold letters. More often Jesus encounters me in simplicity, in daily routines and ordinary occurrences. He is hidden and quiet, small but growing, making his Advent within me.

Christ the King fills heart with songs of praise and celebration; Christ-gestating invites me to quiet contemplation and wonder. Truly, Jesus is not big or small, but both – all at all times. I am invited to love him in every expression and every season – to sing the bold melody of his grandeur and hum the quiet intimacy of his friendship. I am invited to let my experience in Oz color the hidden beauties of daily life – over the rainbow with feet firmly planted in Kansas. Christ the King is reigning while Advent-Christ is gestating, quietly hidden within my heart.

Jesus, make me both big and small enough to love you. Stretch my heart and my mind so that I do not limit you, so that I might know and venerate you as King. Shrink my pride and self, so that in humility I might share your friendship. Draw me to yourself in the grandeur of your kingship and in the quietness of your Advent.





Each year right after Christmas every member of the Archdiocese is asked to make a gift to the Call to Share campaign. By pooling the resources of the Catholic community, we can make such a difference in so many lives, in ways that none of us could do individually. Each one of us can make a gift that expresses the depth of our gratitude for the blessings the Lord has given to us.

Father Tom often talks to us in his homilies about the “deeper” meaning of joy in our lives as opposed to the joy that comes with accumulating “more stuff”. I thought about all the “stuff” we have bought over the years.....as an example, I was counting all the shoes in my closet that I don’t wear and I might also mention all the golf clubs in the basement that Phil no longer uses, so it started to get embarrassing just thinking about it. But the reality is that joy from “things” is only temporary. “Stuff” has a shelf life. On the other hand, *that which we do for the least of our brethren*, is the joy that lasts forever.

Call to Share gives us a chance to create a deeper, lasting joy in our lives by helping others. This campaign supports about 40 ministries throughout our Archdiocese and, for some of them, your Call to Share donations is their sole source of funding.

Phil and I have visited many of these ministries and talked to the directors, walked the halls of the schools, and toured the facilities to learn what they do. Each time we are overwhelmed with emotion both for the people who **work** for the cause and the people who **benefit** from their efforts. From the classes at El Centro to the food pantries at Catholic Charities, your dollars furnish teaching supplies and food and help with utilities in time of unemployment. We can tell you that your donations are stretched to the limit in an effort to reach their mission. Most of these efforts could not continue without your help and soon we will ask once again for your assistance for those in need. Your dollars are vital to all of these ministries and we appreciate all that you have done in the past. With Advent and the Christmas season approaching, it is the time of year that, once again, we all think about “giving”. As you shop for your family gifts this year, try also to remember the many families and ministries that our diocese supports when we are asked to “Share” our many blessings.



Isaiah 58 says, “*If you lavish your food on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then your light shall rise in the darkness, and your gloom shall become like mid-day.*” This is the deeper, lasting joy that can fill your heart by bringing “light” into the lives of those in need. All that we have are the gifts that God gave us.....**He** asks us to make the best decisions regarding how we use them.



The season of Advent is rapidly approaching, which might mean it is time to step back, think about Advent and do some serious planning to make it a most meaningful time of your year. After all, Advent is a time of HOPE and ANTICIPATION of God coming into our lives at all moments, in all places, at all times. It is the time of preparing our minds and our homes for a very special guest.....Jesus.

During Advent, the four weeks before Christmas, we are WAITING.....anticipating the joy of celebrating the birth of our Lord. We are HOPING that God will be ever more present in our daily lives and we are JOYFUL because he is the one we have been waiting for. And we are PREPARING for his arrival.

Part of the Christmas season is always bringing out the decorations of red and green and lights of candles and trees. However, the real colors of Advent are not red and green.....they are violet and rose. So maybe the first decoration for the season should be an Advent wreath, which can occupy a prominent spot in your home. The circular wreath (signifying eternity) holds three violet candles and one rose candle, one to be lit each of the four Sundays of Advent. They represent the coming of the “light of Christ into the world.” It can be a time for families to spend part of each Sunday together as they light one of the candles and say an Advent prayer.

As we get farther into the season, it is very easy to get embroiled and bogged down in a world of shopping, stressing, planning and buying, but that is not what Advent is about. It is not about taking on more than you can do, it’s not about buying presents and it’s not about feeling overwhelmed by trying to please everyone. It is about hope, anticipation and waiting. If you are tired of Christmas by December 25, you are not celebrating Advent correctly. There are some things you can do to add more meaning to your season:

- Volunteer at organizations that are helping the poor
- Serve meals at shelters or soup kitchens and take your children along
- Practice patience with family members
- Do something to help a stranger
- Spend time in the Adoration Chapel in prayer
- Attend extra Masses
- Recognize the “God moments” in your life

It’s “your” Advent, it’s “your” season and it’s “your” time to make some changes.

This year we hope you have a peaceful, beautiful season of WAITING, HOPING and ANTICIPATING the coming of God into your life in a new way. And share hope with those who need it while you wait for that special guest.





Advent Challenge

Advent's here, O Jesus, Lord,
Time to realize
How I love you, give you glory
And how I compromise.

I want to prepare my heart for you,
To celebrate your birth,
To give you honor and glory, Lord,
To always make you first.

But I often make mistakes,
I choose lesser things,
Instead of glorifying you,
I serve other kings.

They are good things, but lesser things,
Above you, these I place.
I can be so selfish, Lord, and
Resist your sweet, sweet grace.

This advent, season of rebirth,
Help me to prepare,
To celebrate incarnate love,
And all my faults lay bare.

I want to give you glory, Lord,
To you honor bring.
The main thing, is make the main thing
Always the main thing.

Advent Joy

Jesus, you are Advent Joy,
We all rejoice today.
You fill our lives with hopefulness
As we meet you on the way.

You have come in history,
You show that we can trust,
A baby born, a man, a cross,
How greatly God loves us.

You are here with us now
In prayer, in Sacrament.
In your Word, and in the poor.
You are heaven sent.

You will come one day to us,
At the end of life we'll see,
And know the joy of perfect love,
And live eternally.

My Advent joy will never end
No matter what life brings,
Even though tears I shed,
With you my heart sings.

These poems are from Msgr. Charles McGlinn's book, Poem Prayers, and were reprinted with his permission.

Msgr. Charles began writing poems as conclusions to his homilies at Sunday Mass, usually summarizing three main points from each homily in the form of a prayer. The growing, positive response to the prayers by parishioners encouraged Msgr. Charles to publish his poems so they can be enjoyed beyond Sunday Mass.

The proceeds from Msgr. McGlinn's book go towards facilitating the operations of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos in Miacatlan, Mexico, an orphanage providing food, clothing, medical services, housing and more for orphaned/abandoned children in Mexico. For those who are interested in purchasing a copy, Poem Prayers can be found on Amazon.



As Christians, we're meant to shine the light of Christ in this world. As Jesus tells us, *You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)*

SHAPE, NUMBER AND COLOR

SHAPE: The circular shape of the wreath, without beginning or end, symbolizes God's complete and unending love for us—a love that sent his Son into the world to redeem us from the curse of sin. It also represents eternal life which becomes ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

NUMBER: The Advent Wreath traditionally holds four candles which are lit, one at a time, on each of the four Sundays of the Advent season. Each candle represents 1,000 years. Added together, the four candles symbolize the 4,000 years that humanity waited for the world's Savior—from Adam and Eve to Jesus, whose birth was foretold in the Old Testament. Some Advent wreath traditions also include a fifth white "Christ" candle, symbolizing purity, that is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas day. Many circular wreaths can incorporate a white candle by adding a pillar candle to the wreath center.

COLOR: Violet is a liturgical color that is used to signify a time of prayer, penance, and sacrifice and is used during Advent and Lent. Advent, also called "little Lent," is the season where we spiritually wait in our "darkness" with hopeful expectation for our promised redemption, just as the whole world did before Christ's birth, and just as the whole world does now as we eagerly await his promised return. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday of Advent, which is Gaudete (Latin for "Rejoice") Sunday.

THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT

1. The Candle of Hope

Color: Purple

Purple is the primary color associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church it symbolizes penance, preparation, and sacrifice. During the first week of Advent, we look forward to Jesus' coming with hope.

2. The Candle of Peace

Color: Purple

During this second week of Advent, we reflect on our lives and work on becoming better-versions-of-ourselves in preparation for Jesus' coming.

3. The Candle of Joy

Color: Pink

The third candle is pink, symbolizing anticipation and rejoicing. During the third week of Advent, we are filled with joy for the near arrival of Jesus on Christmas Day.

4. The Candle of Love

Color: Purple

During the final week of Advent we rejoice in the endless love that God has for us, which is made apparent by the birth of his Son.

See reverse for a coloring page for families.

ADVENT

-Preparing for Christ

COLORING GUIDE

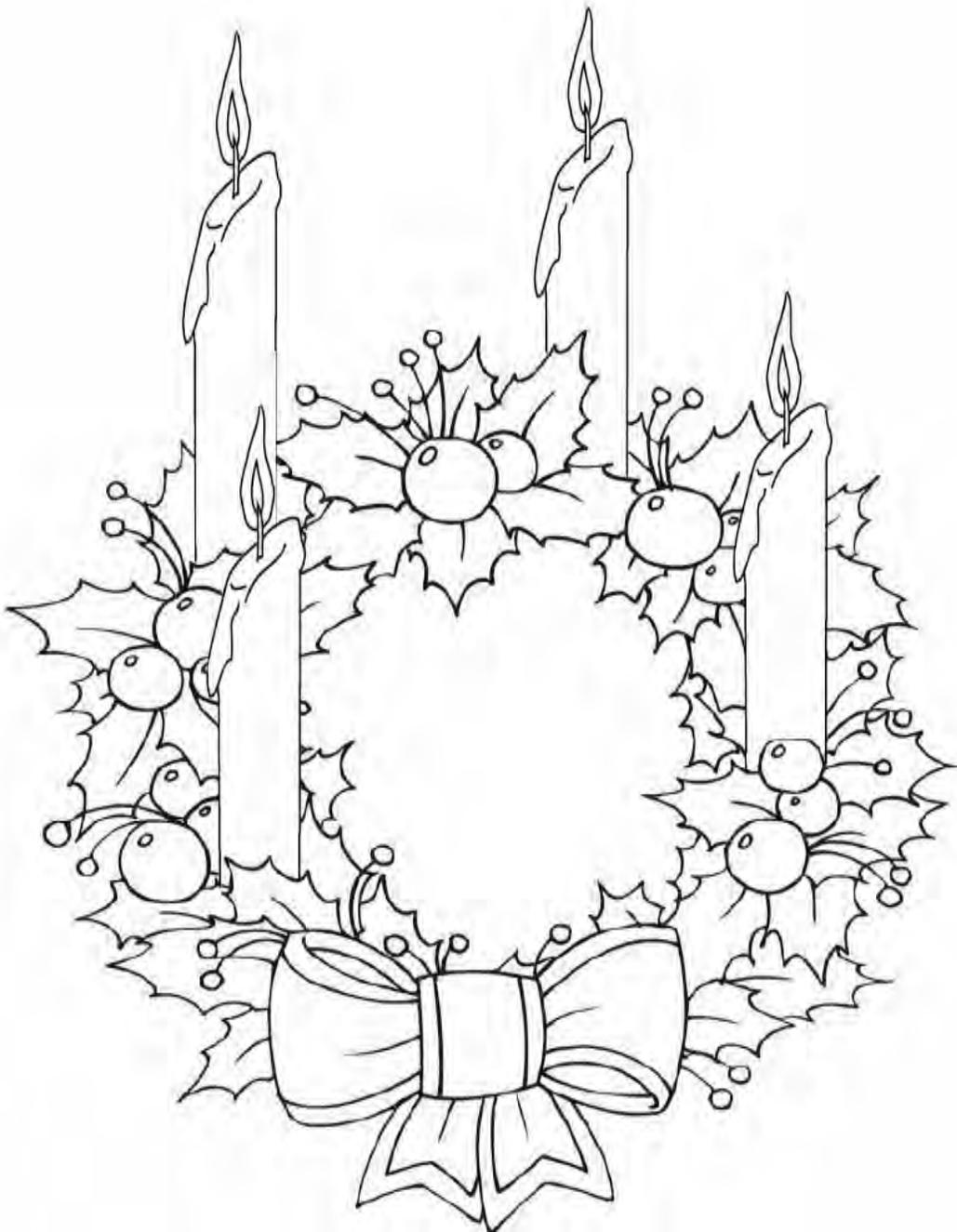
Three candles-purple

One candle-pink

Ribbon-your choice

Holly leaves-green; Holly berries-red

Candle flames-yellow/orange



NOTES:
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Thank you!!!

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