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Cathedral WEEKLY

MAKING ADVENT SPECIAL

SUFFERING ADVENT | DALE AHLQUIST
LEARNING TO SEE GOD AS LOVING FATHER | FATHER ROBERT MCTEIGUE, SJ

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Great Places: The Shrine at Fifty

When it was dedicated a half-century ago, it bespoke a self-confident Catholicism, at home in America and proud to display its Marian piety and its considerable resources. Today, a building that has aged remarkably well and improved in the process makes two important theological statements that are worth pondering on this golden anniversary.

The first statement was unmistakably clear the day the Shrine opened to the public. Its interior was unfinished, save for one colossal icon—the great apse mosaic of Christ come in judgment, which rivets the eye from the moment the pilgrim enters the nave. That image of a stern, majestic Christ was an appropriate "fit" for a Romanesque-Byzantine structure; but it was also a challenge to the saccharine Jesus being peddled by preachers of the "power of positive thinking" in 1959. This Christ makes you think, all right—about the serious business of life, about rendering an account of one's stewardship one day, about the awe-inspiring majesty of Jesus Christ, king of the universe.

Some found it shocking, in 1959; others find it startling today. The icon's most important theological statement, however, is not so much a warning as a reminder: all true devotion to Mary points us to her Son, as Our Lady herself did in her last words in the Gospels—"Do whatever he tells you..." And by pointing us to her Son, who is both Son of God and Son of Mary, Our Lady points us, through the Incarnation, into the second great mystery of Christian faith: the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. The royal road to the great truths of Christianity begins with Mary's "yes" to Gabriel's unexpected visit.

The Shrine makes its second important Marian theological statement in a more recent addition to its decoration: the great sculpture of the "universal call to holiness" which, spanning the length of the basilica's back wall, depicts a rich panorama of

modes of Christian life and sanctity. The universal call to holiness was one of the great themes of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: no matter what their station in life or their state of life in the Church, all the baptized are called to be saints—for becoming a saint is the fulfillment of our human and Christian destiny. Looking at the cosmic Christ in judgment, we are reminded of the source of sanctity in the Church; looking at holiness exemplified in the Body of Christ as we leave the basilica, we're reminded of the extraordinary range of God's redeeming and sanctifying grace as it enlivens disciples.

And the Marian angle here? Mary is the first disciple, because her fiat, her "yes" to the divine plan, sets the pattern of all Christian discipleship. As John Paul II, borrowing from Hans Urs von Balthasar, said in 1987, there are many "profiles" of the Christian life in the New Testament: the Petrine profile sets the pattern for the Church of authority and jurisdiction, as the Pauline profile does for the Church of proclamation and evangelization and the Johannine profile does for the Church of contemplation. The Marian profile, however, is most basic: for everything else in the Church—authority, proclamation, contemplation—exists to serve the deepening of discipleship and the call to holiness that comes from conversion to Christ. And the primordial profile of the Christian disciple's life is set by two paradigmatic expressions of Mary's discipleship: the articulated fiat of the Annunciation, and the silent fiat at the foot of the cross.

The Shrine is the largest Catholic structure in the western hemisphere. More importantly, though, it provides one of the Americas' richest experiences of Catholicism, aesthetically, liturgically, and musically—a catechism in stone, mosaic, and glass, and a noble act of homage to the patroness of the United States.

*George Weigel is the Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a Roman Catholic theologian and one of America's leading commentators on issues of religion and public life.
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RENEWAL OF OUR PARISH



Back from the Holy Land

It was August of 2000 when I returned to Mundelein Seminary for my third of four years of theology studies. That year was going to be stand out because my class was going to spend ten weeks from December into February in the Holy Land studying, praying, and touring, but it wasn't to be. The

following month the prime minister of Israel went up the Temple Mount where the temple once stood and the Dome of the Rock is now. That visit sparked a tremendous outrage among the Palestinians and led the way to an *intifada*, which meant the cancellation of our chance to study in the Holy Land. However, all things in God's time....

After almost twenty years I was finally able to make it to the Holy Land earlier this month, serving as spiritual director for the yearly pilgrimage offered by the diocesan Office for the Missions. Ten nights in the Holy Land took me from Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast where both Ss. Peter and Paul preached to three nights on the Sea of Galilee and the chance to visit Nazareth, Capernaum, Cana, and the sites where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, the Bread of Life discourse, and multiplied the loaves and fishes, among many places. From Galilee, we journeyed up to Jerusalem for six nights, stopping along the way visit Mt. Tabor, where our Lord was transfigured before Peter, James, and John, renewed our baptismal promises at the Jordan River (actually in the Jordan for a few of us), and to Jericho where many great events from the Old and New Testaments took place.

In Jerusalem, I was able to walk in the Lord's footsteps at the sights where so many key events in his earthly life took place. We arrived on a Saturday night and the next morning, with a

good friend who made the trip with me, I went before sunrise to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to visit the site of the Lord's death and resurrection. From Jerusalem, we were also able to visit Bethlehem and the sites surrounding the Nativity of the Lord.

As I write this, I find myself grasping for words to express what the experience was like and the words escape me. I was told that once I visited the Holy Land that I would never read or hear the Scriptures in same way again and I have found that to be truer than I imagined. The visit was one of great grace for me. I was privileged to pray for all of you along the way and I am grateful for the many prayers that were offered for me and the group as we made our pilgrimage. It was a blessing to walk in the Lord's footsteps and to meet people of various ethnicities and religions who call that place "holy" for many reasons. I ask you to please pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that those who live in the Holy Land may find common ground so as to live together in harmony and mutual respect. Finally, if you ever have the chance to visit the Holy Land, GO!

Father Christopher House is the Rector-Pastor of the Cathedral and serves in various leadership roles within the diocesan curia, specifically Chancellor and Vicar Judicial.



WEEKLY COLLECTION INFORMATION DEC 9/10

Envelopes - \$ 4,032.00	Loose - \$ 4,089.00
Maintenance - \$ 225.00	TOTAL: \$ 8,346.00

**\$ 7,729.28 short from the amount
needed to operate**

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK

Monday 18 December

7AM - Elizabeth Mary Foley (Glen and Betty Rogers)

Tuesday 19 December

7AM - Frank Coffey (Family)

Wednesday 20 December

7AM - Catherine Staab (Larry and Sue Spinner)

Thursday 21 December

7AM - Mary Kay Butler-Harrelson (Bev Hoffman)

Friday 22 December

7AM - Jim Meredith (Family)

Saturday 23 December

8AM - Joseph Muller (Family)

Sunday 24 December

7AM - Al Milner

10AM - For the People

5:15PM - Dr. David Mack (Friend from Marian Center)

5:15PM - Charles Henry DeCroix (Glen and Betty Rogers)

5:15PM - Steve Kinsella (Colleen Cornish)

5:15PM - Agnes Heineman (Duane and Kathie Straube)

5:15PM - Margaret Graham (Tom McGee)

4PM - Larry Bussard (Bill Vogt)

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Mass Intentions on page 4...



Advent Stewardship

When I was growing up this was my favorite Sunday in Advent. Why? When I was growing up pink was my favorite color of course! (haha) But seriously, this is one of my favorite weeks of Advent. It is the check-in point; Advent is half-way complete. Advent is a time

that awakens us to the very real presence of Jesus in our lives. It is a time that alerts us to God and requires us to be watchful of his presence in our lives. So, how have we done this season? It is good to check-in on our Advent Stewardship.

Stewardship of Time: Have we spent time with God, in the spirit of stewardship? Consider for the last remaining weeks setting aside some time with Him, either through prayer, daily Mass, or checking out the Advent resources we have posted on the website.

Stewardship of Talents: Have you had an opportunity to share your talents? Over the next two weeks, maybe there is a ministry or a program that you would have the interest in participating as a volunteer. On the Sunday Announcements stuffer you will find numerous opportunities to share your talents!

Stewardship of Treasure: Have you increased your giving or providing extra generosity to someone in need? We have had increased giving opportunities in the past couple weeks, from clothing drives to food drives. As we enter the next two weeks consider how your Parish might be in need and how you might be able to make a special gift.

Advent is a busy season, and it will be over in a blink. Take a moment to pause and spend some time with our Lord. It is important to slow down and be present. His presence in our lives is one of the greatest presents of the season.

Katie Price is the Coordinator for Discipleship and Stewardship at the Cathedral. She comes with an extensive background in this field after helping dioceses and parishes across the nation meet their goal of making discipleship a priority in their parishes. If you would like to learn more about the work she is doing, email her at kprice@cathedral.dio.org.



MASS INTENTIONS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY

Sunday 24 December Christmas Eve
4PM - Kyle Buckman (Mom)

7PM - Peter Albanese (Lily Layden)

Monday 25 December Christmas Day
Midnight Mass - For the People

9AM - Barbara McGee (Family)



Suffering Advent

At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, I fully intend to shoot Rudolph and mount his head, red nose and all, over my mantelpiece this holiday season

And I really don't mind sounding like Scrooge, the immortal Dickens character from A Christmas Carol. His complaints are compelling, and

we can laugh at them in a detached way. But the reason we really like him is that he is a convert. When he falls to his knees, he brings us to our knees along with him. We always rejoice at the end of that story in its countless retellings because a soul has been rescued from hell.

In the meantime, we live through a form of hell that ironically begins the day after Thanksgiving. The secular world calls it the Holiday Season. The Catholic Church calls it Advent. The two are starkly different, but the one thing they have in common is suffering. One group has started early with the Christmas cheer, and they wonder why they are so miserable. The other group is waiting, waiting, anticipating the great day, and the wait is hard. Advent is supposed to be a mini-Lent, a time of prayer and penance and abstinence. Let's talk about all three, not in that order.

For me, the chief form of penance during Advent is shopping. I'm not talking about Christmas shopping. I'm talking about any shopping: grocery shopping or hardware shopping or buying gas at the station. Why? Because every retail establishment feels obligated to inflict on us that grindingly obnoxious "holiday" music. It starts blaring right on cue the day after Thanksgiving, as if to say, "Stop being thankful, and start feeling the pain." They won't play the beautiful carols because those tend to mention shepherds and angels and heavenly hosts and virgins, and, when it comes right down to it, that specific baby who apparently never fussed and yet caused all the fuss. No, only music that is empty of Christmas content is allowed: the jingle jangles about Santa and Rudolph and Frosty the Snowman and memories that nobody has about horses and unlikely demands that snow be let and let and let.

To make them more unbearable, the songs have been jazzed up or heavily electrified, and the singers screech rather than sing them. And to these "traditional" tunes, add the more contemporary offerings that involve one pounding line repeated about 47 times. The only time we hear the word "Christmas" is in such titles as "Honky Tonky Christmas." Not sure what that even means. And "All I want for Christmas is You." Pretty sure what that means. Restaurants, which can always be counted on to play bad music, really ramp it up during December. In any case, none of these songs exactly evoke peace on earth. And any good will is put to the extreme test.

Thus the penance, the pain, the longing for relief. The Christmas tree has become a cross. The good thing is that music chases us out of the stores and back into our homes. There's no place like home for the holidays. That song, by the way, misses the point. There's no place like home the rest of the days. It all comes to an abrupt and undramatic end on Christmas Day. All the decorations in the stores magically disappear and the horrible music mercifully ceases.

That is when Christmas actually begins. Christmas Day is...the First Day of Christmas. We have twelve days of feasting and celebration. When the world's party has ended, ours has just begun. The holidays — the holy days — can finally be observed in their fullness. And we can start listening to decent music.

The world is out of whack about most things, as epitomized by its getting Christmas totally wrong. It attempts to celebrate it before it happens and then without the actual reason for celebrating it. It partakes of Christmas pleasures throughout Advent, and then walks away just as the real event gets underway. The result is a pleasure that is unsatisfying. Abstinence is not a concept the world takes a liking to. It has the same problem with Advent that it has with sex and marriage. Celebrating too soon, and then not properly celebrating at the right time. Not feasting at the right time and then fasting at the wrong time.

And the Advent prayer? "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24) Bet you didn't think of that one. It gets the penance and the anticipation just right.

How do we best express that anticipation? Well, let's turn to G.K. Chesterton for help. The march towards finally saying "Merry Christmas" is "the power of expressing, not negative happiness, but positive hilarity... It is this power of rising into the seventh heaven of mere temper the moment a strain is relaxed; of being cut loose like a captive balloon or springing skyward like a released rocket, that is really the reward of virtue. It is not the power of saying, 'Let us feast; for tomorrow we die.' It is the power of saying, 'Let us fast; for tomorrow we feast.'"

*"...It is not the power of saying,
'Let us feast; for tomorrow we die.'
It is the power of saying, 'Let us
fast; for tomorrow we feast.'"*

Dale Ahlquist is the President of the American Chesterton Society and creator and host of the EWTN television series "G.K. Chesterton: The Apostle of Common Sense."

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Preparing the Way

If we miss the point of Advent, we'll miss the point of Christmas

Humanity is shaken to the very depths, so that we may wake up to the truth of ourselves. The primary condition for a fruitful and rewarding Advent is renunciation, surrender. Humans must let go of all their mistaken dreams, their conceited poses and arrogant gestures, all the pretenses with which they hope to deceive themselves and others. If they fail to do this stark reality may take hold of them and rouse them forcibly in a way that will entail both anxiety and suffering.

The kind of awakening that literally shocks a person's whole being is part and parcel of the Advent idea. A deep emotional experience like this is necessary to kindle the inner light which confirms the blessing and the promise of the Lord. A shattering awakening; that is the necessary preliminary. Life only begins when the whole framework is shaken. There can be no proper preparation without this. It is precisely in the shock of rousing while he is still deep in the helpless, semi-conscious state, in the pitiable weakness of that borderland between sleep and waking, that a person finds the golden thread which binds earth to heaven and gives the benighted soul some inkling of the fullness it is capable of realizing and is called upon to realize.

Father Alfred Delp, S.J. was a German Jesuit priest and philosopher of the German Resistance. Part of the inner Kreisau Circle resistance group, he is considered a significant figure in Catholic resistance to Nazism. Implicated in the failed 1944 July Plot to overthrow the Nazi Dictator Adolph Hitler, Delp was arrested, and sentenced to death. He was executed in 1945. Reprinted with Permission.

"Life is Good"

My son suffered a severe traumatic brain injury in an accident at age seventeen

Stable, but still comatose, he needed a feeding tube. My husband and I met with his care team to authorize it. A doctor asked us if we had considered whether our son would want this; perhaps, she suggested, we should "let nature take its course" rather than subject him to a diminished life.

At that moment the essential simplicity of the truth — life itself is good — was all we had to cling to. We explained that he didn't have a choice between this life and his life before the accident. This life he now had was God's, not ours, to give or to take; our only job, as his parents, was to love him. Loving him means feeding him; there was no choice to make.

A person at the meeting later told us that many in the room were very moved that we were able to reject clearly the false assumption that suffering made life unworthy. Now our son is home. Still completely disabled, his life is a blessing to all of us. His suffering and disability, while real, are the least important things about him. He is loved. He enjoys friends visits, playing video games, watching sports (he still summons up a really obnoxious smirk when his Packers beat my Bears). His dignity and worth come not from what he can do, but from who he is — a child of God.

Kimberly Shankam is the academic dean of Benedictine College. She and her husband live in Atchison, Kansas, where they care for their youngest son.

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Conception and Knowledge

If Our Lady knew God before she had conceived her Son, how more intimately she knew him afterwards, when the Holy Spirit had descended on her

Then all the light of the Spirit of Love burnt its radiant fires within her, and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, beginning with wisdom and understanding, were given to her to spend on her Child.

For every mother the knowledge of God is the essential preparation for motherhood: to know him as a tender but infinitely powerful Father; then to pray for the descent of the Spirit for the divine ray that illumines natural love and bestows all the qualities of the Spirit's indwelling presence, which are the basic necessities in bringing up a child.

Our Lady knew that her child was the Child of God before he was her Child, and because she loved God, knowing his goodness, his Fatherhood and his Motherhood, his tenderness and his power, his pity and his justice, above all his love for his children, she was consoled by this knowledge. It made it possible to bear the foreboding of suffering that haunted her. It would have been unbearable to hold that infant Son in her arms, knowing that he must go away to a life of suffering and a cruel death, were it not for her faith in his heavenly Father, were it not for her certainty that the hands of God would always be holding him, and that God's hands, incredible though it seemed, would hold him even more tenderly, even more securely, than hers.

Caryll Houselander was a British Roman Catholic laywoman. Reprinted with Permission.

Offering Ourselves with the Widow and Mary

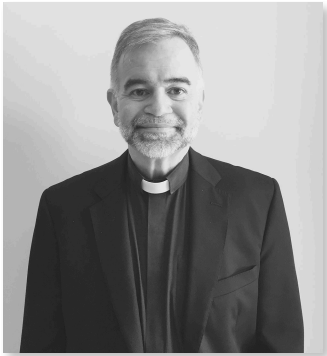
Mary presents the soul to her Son, and he receives this soul tenderly out of love for that incomparable Mother. Sometimes the soul can continue her prayer to Mary with an intimate sense of the presence of our Lord. More often, vocal prayer becomes transformed into that more complete union which suspends the powers of the soul.

It sometimes happens that the soul finds herself especially united to the Blessed Virgin whom she feels to be a sacred link strengthening her union with our Lord. As for me, I cannot pray to that beloved Mother without her being the means of bringing back to me the intimate presence of our Lord if I am deprived of it, or if I already possess it, of rendering it even closer and more profound....

My soul was sad and cast down at the sight of my soul's wretchedness before God. When this sadness amounts to an impediment to prayer, it is a temptation. Our Lord deigned to make me feel this. He showed me that it is better to lean on him than to brood too much over ourselves, and changing my interior state in one instant he drew my soul into himself....

Once more I understood that we are all, and myself in particular, nothing but a tissue of imperfections, and that the least glimmer of virtue can only come to us from our Savior Jesus Christ. I remained in contemplation of his adorable nature; for, however little of this nature he deigns to reveal to the soul, she forthwith goes out of herself and loses herself in him.

Lucie Christine was the pseudonym of an upper middle class Frenchwoman, Mathilde Bouille. Reprinted with Permission.



Learning to see God as Loving Father

The Christian life can
become a lifeless life
if we only see it as
an exercise in
sin management

"None of you kids arrived with
a manual, you know!" So said
my father, frequently, but espe-

cially if we appeared to be second-guessing his judgments in
how we were being raised. All of my friends who have children
have used that phrase or something similar. It seems to me that
parenting requires a constant juggling of considerations and con-
cerns.

So, it doesn't surprise me when parents struggle to do the right
thing; likewise it doesn't surprise me that
parents often struggle to know what the
right thing to do is. Often a load of com-
mon sense and some deep wisdom are
required — and an abiding commitment
to notice and intervene. Diligent parents
never have a day off from parenting —
the care and worry don't stop. None-
theless, after 20+ years of university
teaching, it boggles me when I see excep-
tionally fine young adults whose parents seem to have little or no
idea of how very fine their maturing children are. I've met stu-
dents over the years who are honorable, virtuous, talented, wise
beyond their years, with a deep goodness — yet their parents
seem blind to the praiseworthiness of their grown children.
Sometimes I've seen that blindness myself; more often I hear
about it from the students themselves.

I mentioned this to a very dear friend and neighbor. (I see him
and his wife as quite effective parents.) "How could that happen?"
"I asked him. "How could these parents overlook or be indiffer-
ent to the goodness of their young adult children?" He smiled (I
trust not indulgently) at my question and replied: "I can under-
stand that. It's really quite easy to explain." An illuminating con-
versation ensued.

My friend said that as parents, there is a constant concern to
correct, to repeat lessons, to improve, to manage, and to control.
Of course, those efforts are needed. But being so diligent entails
a risk—seeing your child as a problem to be solved, a condition
to be managed, or as some kind of accident-waiting-to-happen.
That narrowness of focus can be dangerous. It runs the risk of
the child (young or adult) perceiving himself as being a constant
disappointment to his parents, and it runs the risk of parents fail-
ing to look for the good news within their own kids. I believe that
all these difficulties have spiritual roots.

So many folks I know see their Christian life primarily as an
exercise in sin management. Sin is not to be trivialized of
course, but if discipleship is only about ascertaining one's own
compliance in anticipation of the final examination (that is, divine
judgment), then the Christian life can become a lifeless life. God
is seen as an auditor and not a Father, our discipleship is rooted

in anxiety and shame rather than adoption. Living that way, of
course, is as fruitless as it is exhausting.

My fear is that sometimes we take our stunted view of a love-
less God and imitate that in some degree as we raise our chil-
dren. God appears always angry to us — we appear always
angry to our children. God appears to find constant fault and
disappointment with us — we appear to find constant fault and
disappointment with our children. God appears never pleased or
satisfied with us — we appear never pleased or satisfied with our
children. And just as we find it oppressive to live under God's
seemingly constant scowl, so do our children find it oppressive to
live under ours.

For the love of God and for the love of the children (young or
old) placed in our care, we must strive to have our distorted, soul-
crushing view of God corrected and healed. I can recommend
two good books to help facilitate that process. *Fathered by
God* and *The Furious Longing of God* are good places to start.

If we can see that we not only have to answer to God but that
we are called by Him, by name, into His kingdom and into His
heart, then we will be less likely to
stagger under the burden of believing
that God looks at us with a critic's
eye and not a Father's eye. If we
can come to know that our Heavenly
Father enjoys loving us, we may be-
gin to communicate to our children,
young and old, that we enjoy loving
them. Meanwhile, I continue to pray
that the parents of some amazing
university students will be dazzled and delighted by the good
young adults their children have become.

*Father Robert McTeigue, SJ, is a member of the Maryland Province of
the Society of Jesus. A professor of philosophy and theology, he has
taught and lectured in North and Central America, Europe and Asia.*

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PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests.
Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments.

Help our priests to be strong in their vocation.
Set their souls on fire with love for your people.

Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to
follow in the footsteps of Jesus.
Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom.

Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel.
Allow them to experience joy in their ministry.

Help them to become instruments of your divine grace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our
Eternal Priest.

Amen.