



Liturgical Commission Newsletter

Diocese of Antigonish

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What is your Emmanuel Moment?

During advent we sing “O Come O Come Emmanuel.” “Emmanuel “is the Hebrew word for “God is with- us.” Our Advent song is a prayer of yearning for the coming of the Lord into our world to establish a Kingdom of peace and justice for all.

While Jesus taught us to pray “Thy Kingdom come”, our experience tells us the Reign of God has not come fully, because we do not enjoy harmony, peace, justice and love for all around us. God’s Kingdom has a ‘not yet’ quality to it.

Though we may not always be fully aware of them, we do experience these “Emmanuel”, or “God with us” moments in our lives. Advent calls us to a deeper awareness and preparation of heart and mind to awaken to the many ways we may experience God’s presence within us and among us. Whenever we seek to serve the needs of the most marginalized in our midst, for example, this is an “Emmanuel moment”, calling us to become the hands, heart and feet of Christ for others. When we try to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts within families and among

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friends or colleagues, this is an “Emmanuel moment”. Whenever we recognize our need for forgiveness and reconciliation, we allow ourselves to be open to an “Emmanuel moment”. Whenever we use our voices to speak out against an injustice this is also an “Emmanuel moment”.

Emmanuel — God with us — is profound compassion on the part of the Father. It is a

reflection of God’s desire to be with us. The liturgical season of Advent is a privileged time of listening, particularly to God’s word in the scriptures, speaking to our hearts. This Word, while indeed a comfort, is also a call to prophetic witness and mission, so that God’s people may themselves experience the mercy and compassion of God in their own “Emmanuel moments”.

Advent invites us to take time to listen, to be more reflective, and to spend quality time in prayer preparing our hearts, minds for God’s presence, and making room in our lives to receive Christ, the Newborn Saviour, rejoicing in Emmanuel — God is with us.

MUSIC FOR ADVENT Some Suggestions from **CBWIII**

Arise, Your Light has Come
303

Come Thou Long Expected
Jesus #300 & # 306

Every Valley 308

Listen My People #309

O Come Divine Messiah #310

O Come O Come Emmanuel
#313

The Angel Gabriel Came
#316

Wait for the lord # 319

God of Day and God of
Darkness #477

Let Heaven Rejoice #557
Bread of Life # 597

Suggestions from **Celebrate in Song**

Christ Be Our Light # 6.3

Holy is Your Name 6.23

There is a longing 6.15

Come O Promised One 6.13

Prayers for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles



First Week: All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. AMEN

Second Week: God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. AMEN.

Third Week: Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. ~AMEN.

Fourth Week: Father, all-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which

announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. ~AMEN.

Excerpted from *A Prayer Book of Catholic Devotions* by William G. Storey



Time to Get Ready: An Advent, Christmas Reader to Wake your

Soul by Mark A. Villano (2015 Paraclete Press)

Consider this book as an invitation and an opportunity to retreat from hectic life schedules obsession with time and learn to experience living in God's "Kairos Time". This Advent gem can serve as a companion for personal prayer. This book

teaches us to pray, reflect, meditate and contemplate the awe-inspiring days of Advent.

Advent is the holy season that calls us to wake up, to be alert and to listen and wait on the Lord. *Time to Get Ready* helps us to learn to tell the time, not the 'chronos' notion of time, but rather to find rest in God's "Kairos" time.

During this sacred season of Advent, Christians throughout the world are invited to press the pause button of our hectic days



and to learn to "be still", listening and longing for God's breaking forward into our time.

Mark Villano opens up the season of Advent for us, weaving scriptural stories, themes and liturgical traditions into a tapestry of Advent Hope, Light, Joy and Love. His journey with our Ancestors in Faith crosses many times zones, culturally, historically and spiritually, all the while drawing us into God's sacred time.

— Margie Gillis

To see the author talk about this book: www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6L8S_-qZOM

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO "SPREAD THE WORD" BY MAKING COPIES OF THIS NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE TO YOUR PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEES, PASTORAL COUNCILS AND PARISHIONERS. NEWSLETTERS WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE ON THE DIOCESAN WEBSITE.

Thoughts on Marian Music During Advent

Advent nourishes our trustful waiting, and becomes an ideal time to contemplate God's plan and promises, while preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord into our lives.

Advent is characterized by the work of the Holy Spirit who spoke through the prophets, by whose power the Word became incarnate in Mary's womb, and filled Elizabeth with such joy and zeal that she proclaimed Mary as the mother of the Lord. This same Spirit enkindles in us the light of Christ, calling us forth, enabling us to announce the Messiah to all peoples --- our Advent mission!

Advent is also characterized by hope. Hope, for God's faithful, is not simply waiting for something to happen. Hope is committing ourselves to the building of God's Kingdom. This hope encourages us to transformation our daily lives to correspond with God's plan for us.

Moreover, we recall that Advent is, as John Paul II said, the Marian time *par excellence*. The Church recalls the Daughter of Zion, the Virgin who waits to welcome the Word of God. On the Fourth Sunday, our liturgy celebrates Mary, (she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled). The collect of the Mass recalls the Annunciation, the mystery of vocation, mission and consecration through the power of the Spirit. It is in the Virgin that the Spirit descends in power just as he descended on the prophets of the old Covenant consecrated for the salvation of the people. Modelling ourselves on Mary (a woman of hope who accepted God's will "hoping

against hope"), we are invited to prepare ourselves to meet the Lord who comes. During the first part of Advent the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception urges us to reflect upon the wonder of God's love carried out in Mary. The Virgin Mother of Christ appears before all people as the sign of God's election, and a sign of sure hope.

Given this particular Marian tone of Advent, how then do those who prepare liturgy, and in particular our music ministries appropriately reflect and incorporate this tone into our Sunday liturgy?

Each Sunday liturgy during Advent calls us, like Mary, to open the doors of our hearts to Christ. Mary, Woman of the Promise, 465 CBW III, highlights the characteristic stance Advent. By singing lyrics such as "through your open, willing spirit", "faithful to the Word within you", "help us to be true disciples", we too become expectant and hopeful that the God-who-comes will find us ready to receive the abundance of his mercy. This piece of music, perhaps not as widely known as more "traditional" Marian hymns, has a familiar melody (tune: Drake's Broughton) and is quite appropriate for the whole season. This piece could be used during the preparation of gifts.

The Third Sunday of Advent has us proclaiming the Responsorial Canticle based on the Magnificat. The musical setting (24, CBW III) has as its refrain, "My soul rejoices in my God". The Magnificat is as one writer put it, the *magna carta* of any faith experience. It proclaims that God establishes his dwelling place in the human heart and stamps the heart with two characteristic features: thanksgiving and sharing. Thanksgiving refers back to God

in praise for His gift and in sharing, we are enabled to reach out and share this gift with other human beings. Thus we take up our vocation and mission.

Liturgical planners may wish to consider another setting for the Magnificat perhaps for the Fourth Sunday of Advent. Recalling the Magnificat from the previous Sunday would help reinforce that we are people of hope and mission. Consider this as a piece for preparation of gifts. An interesting musical setting based on the Magnificat is My Soul Proclaim (428, Glory and Praise, 1997). Choirs will have some fun with this piece as it has an *ostinato* (repeated) refrain under which are sung the verses simultaneously.

With the Annunciation the Fourth Sunday of Advent's focus, two pieces in the CBW III ought to be considered for this liturgy. One, of course is *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*. This piece helps us look to the New Testament readings for a Christian understanding of the fulfillment scriptures. As Patty Fowler wrote in the September-October 1998 Celebrate journal (p. 41), "Who could not be drawn into the story of an angel with 'wings as drifted snow' and 'eyes of flame' appearing to the young Mary with the words 'From God, all hail!?' We all know the message that he brought: 'You shall bear a holy child, by whom we shall to God be reconciled.' And Mary's trust, her 'yes' to God, is a model for all seekers of truth, for all who experience exile in any form."

Another piece appropriate for Advent, but particularly so on this Fourth Sunday, is *Servant of the Word* (467, CBW III). We praise Mary who became the preeminent

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Thoughts on Marian Music During Advent (continued from page 3)

disciple by being “servant of the Word”, “docile to the will of God”, bearer of God’s Son”. The refrain calls out “pray for us and lead us to the Son of God.” Some will recognize this piece as the traditional O Sanctissima, (468, CBW III).

Through the ideas sketched out in this article we see that Advent time is a season that highlights our Blessed Mother. Yet we also see that while recalling Mary as the first disciple, the “woman of the promise”, we also place this emphasis within the greater Advent context. Looking through the CBW III we also recall Isaiah’s words of preparing the way of the Lord when every valley will be lifted up and the “mountains made low” when we sing Every Valley (308, CBW III). We proclaim that “hope shall triumph” in O Come, Divine Messiah (310, CBW III). We are moved to mission when we sing “obey the call of the Spirit, proclaim liberty to captives, and bring comfort to the sorrowful” in Arise, Your Light Has Come (302, CBW III).

— Fr. Conrad Edwards

Advent Scripture & Prayer



During Advent there are three prevalent themes we see as we wait patiently for the coming of Christ. We long for the Messiah, are urged to be alert for Jesus’ Second Coming, and meditate on Christ’s presence in our

lives now. The Scripture readings for the four weeks of Advent and the Liturgy of the Hours revolve around the first two of these themes. They encourage proper preparation, point to the grace and humility of Mary, and show us how to adore God in the Incarnation, and recognize the glory of Jesus and how he frees us from sin and ingratitude. We hear from the prophet Isaiah and are drawn to the compelling message of John the Baptist in the Gospels.

It is important to consider how we can grow in spiritual wholeness during such a busy commercial season. Take time for silence and reflection each day with Scripture, a devotional prayer, or with an Advent calendar. Dwell with the scene of the Nativity. What is it like to imagine the journey of Mary and Joseph, to be with them as they bring Jesus into the world? St. Ignatius had a deep reverence for this manger scene that we see in the Spiritual Exercises. Consider praying with saints like him, with the Liturgy of the Hours, or with the *O Antiphons* the last week before Christmas.

Aspects of the Season

Violet vestments. Rather than penance, the use of violet in Advent reflects longing and anticipation. Some parishes use a blue-toned purple (the royal purple) to express the season. Blue vestments are not used in Canada. Rose vestments may be used on the third (*Gaudete*) Sunday to signal the mid-point of the season.

The Glory to God is not sung and the organ and other musical instruments are used in moderation, not as a sign of penance, but to allow us to anticipate the full joy of the 25th. These will be taken up again at Christmas. Flowers too may be used, but in moderation so as to leave a sense of abundance for the Nativity.

Alleluia continues to be sung in the Gospel Acclamation and in other songs. This is the clearest indication that Advent is a season of expectation rather than of penance.

Advent Wreath. Although originally used in home prayer, the wreath has found a place in the Advent decoration of the church building. Its evergreen circle and four candles reflect the passage of the Advent season. It is often blessed at the beginning of Mass on the First Sunday.

Reconciliation. Although not a season of penance, reconciliation (through penance services and personal celebration of the sacrament) finds a special place in the season. The sacrament is celebrated as we prepare a welcome for the Lord and seek to approach his coming with hearts free of sin and filled with praise.

Waiting. Advent is a time of longing and waiting for the Lord to come. Premature decoration of the church building and early use of Christmas songs at liturgy compromise the spirit of expectation. Do “Christmas” parties limit our appreciation of the coming season?

From CCCB *Celebrating the Season of Advent 2006*

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