

# Spirit of the Season

# Advent 2001

Liturgical Year A [www.liturgy.demon.co.uk/sos.html](http://www.liturgy.demon.co.uk/sos.html)

Spirit of the Season is a publication from the Liturgy Office which is aimed at putting accessible liturgical information into the hands of teachers and those involved in education and formation. This publication is available on the www at the above address. You are free to photocopy it for a wider distribution. Please let us know what you think of Spirit of the Season - it really helps.

## TAX MAN GIVES

MATTHEW



For the next year our Sunday readings will be dominated by the gospel according to Matthew. As it is the first gospel to appear in the New Testament it carries the tag of Year A. There is a cycle of three years.

**J**esus the Teacher.  
The teaching ministry of Jesus comes immediately to the forefront in the gospel of Matthew.

**M**atthew's real identity is unknown although about the second century the name of Matthew the tax collector is attached.

**J**esus God-with-us  
The major theme of Matthew is announced in a title for Jesus drawn from the prophecy of Isaiah. The eternal God comes near us in the incarnation of Jesus, and his rule will last for ever. The followers of Jesus share the mission to bring all peoples into the rule of God.

**1st Sunday of Advent**  
2 December 2001  
**Sunday Lectionary** Cycle A  
**Weekday Lectionary** Cycle II

**GETTING IN TOUCH**  
*note new phone numbers*

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*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
and death's dark shadows put to flight,*

## Entering into the Mystery that is **Advent**

**Advent** is the Church's name for the turning of autumn into winter. Throughout the autumn our eyes have been distracted from death by the underlying beauty of the season. Bright chrysanthemums, fiery leaves on the trees and ground — these lively signs turned our gaze from death. But now as November ends, the chrysanthemums have turned to mush and the trees are bare. Death is unmasked. Our Easter faith is put to the test.

In the liturgy, Advent also arrives suddenly, as if a switch has been thrown, like a frost that lays waste the garden, like a sudden snowfall that transfigures the landscape. The scriptures describe the Lord arriving "like a thief in the night," "when we least expect it." "Be on guard" is the Lord's own warning. "Be on guard."

First Advent, then Christmas — that's something basic to our calendar. And this basic information is something we probably need to spell out clearly because it's not common knowledge. Ask around. Many hear the word "Advent" as the Church's term for "holiday season." Many Catholics don't know that Advent and Christmas are two different seasons - and why should they? For generations now almost every parish and school have filled Advent with Christmas parties and pageants. The excuse offered for jumping the gun on Christmas is that the days between Christmas and Epiphany are a school holiday. For some it is worse! College here finishes on 14th December for four weeks! If we jump the gun on Christmas we lose Advent, and that would be a terrible loss. It's tough being a Liturgical Christian because when we get to Christmas and its celebrations many about us call it quits by 27th!

### **The Preface from the Mass for Greater Advent when we prepare to celebrate Christmas**

It is truly right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When first he came among us  
in the lowliness of human flesh,  
he fulfilled the plan you formed long ago  
and opened for us the way to salvation.  
Now, hoping that the salvation promised us  
will be ours,  
we watch for the day  
when Christ will come again  
in majesty and glory.

And so, with angels and archangels,  
with all the heavenly host,  
we proclaim your glory  
and join their unending chorus of praise:"

#### **CLASSROOM TIP**

*A useful prayer from Monday 17th December onward which could be followed by singing the Holy, Holy, Holy.*



## CLASSROOM HELP



Here is an Advent Service that is quite possible. It took us just over the hour to do with a school of 320 pupils KS1&2. Each class constructed a Jesse Tree but used only one symbol for their tree. So for example there was one tree, the twigs the colours of the rainbow with 21 small hanging rainbows. When we held this service in the parish Church the place looked amazing!

## Liturgy for Advent: Preparing for Christmas

Gathering song O come, O come, Emmanuel

Introduction and Welcome

One child from each class to come out and hang a symbol from their class tree onto a an empty tree.

**Creation** (tree symbol and story)

First Reading Genesis 1:6-12

Response in song Oh what a wonderful world.

**Abel**

Second Reading Genesis 4:8-10

Response in song When is he coming.

**Noah**

Third Reading Genesis 6:19-21

Response in song There is a river.

**Abraham**

Fourth Reading Genesis 15:5-18

Response in song Yahweh, I know you are near.

**Isaac**

Fifth Reading Genesis 22:1-14

Response in song How lovely on the mountains.

**Jacob**

Sixth Reading Genesis 27:41-44

Response in song Do not be afraid.

**Rachel**

Seventh Reading Genesis 29:15-20

Response in song Like a sea without a shore.

**Joseph**

Eighth Reading Genesis 50:15-19

Response in song I the Lord of sea and sky.

**Moses**

Ninth Reading Exodus 3:1-8

Response in song Moses, I know you're the man

**David**

Tenth Reading 1 Samuel 17:7-13

Response in song The King of glory comes.

Gospel of the Annunciation (sung)

The Angel Gabriel from.

Shepherd scene While Shepherds Watched.

Mary and Joseph scene

Silent Night.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Dispersal song Holy Virgin, by God's decree.

## What about a Liturgical Crib?

It might come as a surprise to some of the children that the Crib is made up of various Gospel stories all mashed together - a confused story! You might like to suggest that the children take home the idea of a Liturgical Crib. Hence this year is the Gospel according to St. Matthew. He talks about Magi (2:1-12) The crib this Christmas could therefore contain: The baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, "some wise men." Next year, Mark has no infancy narrative, so, go for the traditional St. Francis Crib. The year after, Year C, Luke has the lowly shepherds. (2:1-20) Such basic accommodation might also house the animals as well as the visiting shepherds.

### MORE ON THE LITURGY FOR ADVENT



You will have worked out that there is a great deal of singing involved in this service. One idea is to share out the songs to each class. You might like to consider letting the class sing the song that reflects their tree. Just out of interest we let year

6 handle the readings.

With such a rich variety of readings it is possible to select and adapt the service to your needs. Oh and before I forget - we did not jump into Christmas - there was no baby! That is the story for the Christmas Day!

## Music & Resources for the Season...



**School Year Church Year** by Peter Mazar has been recently published by Liturgy Training Publications of Chicago. It is a follow up to his book on decorating the liturgical space *To Crown the Year*. It is packed with creative ideas both for classroom displays and prayer. There is a strong emphasis of tradition in the best sense and also explores customs of different cultures. The only caveat is that the US school year is slightly different to ours. Recommended - it will be surely be the basis of a number of pieces in SoS in the next year. LTP Publications is distributed in the UK by McCrimmons (01702 218956)

**Veni Emmanuel** - Music for Advent and Christmas. Decani books are bringing out a companion to the hymnbook *Laudate* and the collection of music for Lent and Easter-*Resurrexit*. (01638 716579)

Does your school know a setting of the **Magnificat**? Mary's song of praise should come easily to our lips. There are a lot of setting among all the hymnbooks. For a further challenge can you sing the **Benedictus**?

## Mary in Advent

The Blessed Virgin Mary is close to our hearts during Advent. Her statue can receive attention, perhaps with a swath of dark blue and silver fabric wrapped around it. Nearby, emblems of the sun, moon and 12 stars can call to mind the words of Revelation 12:1. I have even used a very large European Flag. The 12 Stars are now the heraldic symbol for unity!

Possibly, during Advent your usual year round statue of Mary might be replaced with or complimented by an image of **The Immaculate Conception** (Saturday, 8th December. The statue of Our Lady of Lourdes is ideal) The statue will show Mary wrapped in the sash once worn by pregnant women. It is even a custom during Advent in some places to veil Mary's statue (especially to veil ones that

depict Mary holding the infant Jesus) and to remove the veil at Christmas.



On feasts of Mary, out-of-season roses (or other flowers) may be used to ornament Mary's shrine. Roses and other flowers that are coaxed into blossom during winter are signs of Gabriel's words to Mary: "...for nothing is impossible with God." In our tradition, Mary's symbols include flowers and fruits, since she represents the full perfection of God's creatures. Within the womb of Mary the "divinisation" of the universe began, a divinisation that will be completed when Christ is all in all.

*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 for his coming.*

## Mary in Christmas

With the Solemnity of **The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God**, celebrated on 1st January, the Christmas season certainly crowns Mary with honour. While the Crib scene will show Mary in the nativity setting, the solemnity of 'Theotokos' - Mother of God, might ask us to adorn



the parish shrine to Mary. As schools are likely to be on holiday for this feast, this is really for your information. These two seasons are the new Mary times replacing the devotional cycle of over 30 years ago.

*Hail, Mary. Mother of God!*

Spirit of the Season is put together by Paul Varey. Material for inclusion should be sent to: Trinity & All Saints College, Leeds, LS18 5HD. Tel: 0113 283 7201 Fax: 0113 283 7200 Email: p\_varey@tasc.ac.uk

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