

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.

NOVEMBER 30, 2008

—Mark 13:33

GOD HAS A DIFFERENT PLAN

We begin the season of Advent with a heartfelt call for our own repentance. We remember God's faithful love for us, and call upon God to help us to turn back. For "behold, you are angry, and we are sinful: (Isaiah 64:4). In the first reading and in the psalm, we recall God's promises and lament our unfaithfulness and our guilt. We call upon God's might and power in order to save us. With Isaiah, we ask God to "rend the heavens and come down, / with the mountains quaking before you" (Isaiah 63:19)

Yes, God is faithful to us, because we are the work of God's hands. God is the potter, we are the clay. And yet, our concept of how God will come to save us is rooted in our own expectations of a warrior God who crushes mountains and thunders into our lives with great noise and glory. But God has a different plan: the Incarnation.

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES REQUESTS

Catholic Charities of Long Beach needs **toys to distribute to 1,000 children at Christmas time.** Santa will see the children December 9 so we need all contributions to be collected by December 5th. Please call **Anna Totta at 562.900.6602** for further information. Santa needs more helpers this year than ever before.

Catholic Charities of Los Angeles is requesting donations to **assist the victims of the recent wild fires in L.A., Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.** The funds will be used to assist individuals and families with housing, food, clothing, financial assistance and counseling. If you are able to contribute, call Catholic Charities at 213.251.3494 or mail a donation to CC of Los Angeles, Resource Development Dept., 1531 James M. Wood Blvd., L.A. CA 90015-0095. You may also go to CatholicCharitiesLA.org and donate online. Thank you in advance for your compassion and generosity!

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON GOD'S WORD

The readings for next Sunday, *2nd Sunday of Advent* are listed below along with questions for your quiet reflection throughout the coming week.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-14

GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

Like John, we are sent to "testify to the light" of Christ in our words and actions. Do I take time for reflection in my life that I might recognize how Jesus is calling me to testify?

PARISH PROJECTS AND GATHERINGS

THIS WEEKEND

Peace and Justice Ministry has a large collection bin stationed outside the church for you to donate men's and women's new hygiene items, under garments and socks.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

We will have a prayer service at 6:00 p.m. in the parish hall followed by a potluck dinner. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy this Advent gathering. If your last name begins with letter A-H please bring a salad, I-R please bring a hot main dish; S-Z please bring a dessert.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Comunidad will meet at 7 p.m. in the parish hall. A reenactment of the apparition of our Lady of Guadalupe will be presented and will be followed by a pot luck dinner. Please bring *your* specialty dish — appetizer, salad, entrée, side dish or dessert to add to the holiday celebration. All are welcome.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

Our parish Society of St. Vincent de Paul will be conducting a jacket and blanket drive after all of the Masses. Please take your clean, gently used items to classroom number 1 after any of the Masses **on Sunday**, December 7th. All of the jackets and blankets will be distributed to the homeless throughout the month of December.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Bilingual communal penance service in the church at 7:00 p.m. with individual confessions to follow.

DECEMBER 6/7, 13/14, 20/21

Comunidad bell ringers will be outside the Church after all the Masses asking for donations for the parish Christmas Collection. Your donations will help make Christmas special for St. Matthew's families in need.

FEAST OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Monday, December 8 is a holy day of obligation. There will be **NO vigil Mass** on December 7th. Mass times are 8:00a.m. and 5:30p.m. in English and 7:15p.m. in Spanish on December 8th

BLOOD DRIVE

Next weekend after all the Masses, there will be sign-ups to give blood on December 28th.

Before giving blood, you must:

- Be in good health; bring valid photo I.D., be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 lbs., Have gotten no tattoos within the last 12 months