



# SIMBAHAY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH CHURCH, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES

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## Joyful Preparations and Great Expectations

by **VALERIE AVERIA**

I am a December baby, born on the first week of Advent. But my story—and the story of every birth—begins before that. First, I was a life growing inside the world of my mother's womb. Hidden, silent, protected—a mystery. As her belly grew with life, her heart swelled with desire. She longed to meet me, to see me, to hold me—but I was still inside her, the mystery of a new life yet to be joyfully revealed by God.

My mother had to wait. She made good use of that time. She prepared her heart. She prepared her home. During that waiting period, the world within and around her transformed. All her actions were informed by one fact: I was coming.

Advent is all about preparing our life for the coming of a new life. This season, the One who comes is the Giver of Life and Life everlasting himself: Lord God Jesus Christ. We relive his first coming – his entry to human history as Mary's baby boy. And we anticipate his final coming – his glorious return as Judge and King.

How is it that the Lord, himself, comes to me? How should we prepare for these astonishing encounters with God?

Mothers hold the answer.

In choosing her to be the bearer of life, God blessed Woman. In consecrating her womb as a sacred space for creation, He made her the model of preparation for miraculous occurrences. God's creative power is a physical reality that grows within the mother. And throughout, she is called to hope and believe that what is to come is something good. Something beautiful. Something of God's.

It is truly a journey of faith. In imitating and reflecting on a mother's journey, Advent becomes more meaningful. Let us look at our own mothers for direction. And let us look at the perfect mother, the *Theotokos*, the God-bearer, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She who prepared perfectly for Jesus.

He is coming!

This Advent, let our actions be informed by this one fact. This is a time for ardently desiring God and actively preparing to receive him. Let's examine ourselves. Rearrange our priorities.

Purify our hearts. And transform the world within and around us as expectant mothers do. Let's make good use of this time so we can invoke him without fear and with great joy: "Come Lord Jesus."



## ST. JOHN BOSCO PARISH CHURCH MAKATI

A. Arnaiz Avenue  
Makati City, Philippines  
Tel. (+632) 894-5932 to 34  
sjbmakati@gmail.com  
www.sjbmakati.com

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## SCHEDULE OF MASSES

### Monday to Friday:

6:30am • 7:30am • 12:15pm • 6:00pm

Holy Hour every Thursday after the  
6:00 pm Mass

### Saturday:

6:30am • 7:30am  
6:00pm (Anticipated Mass)

### Sunday:

6:00am • 7:15am • 8:30am • 10:00am\*  
11:15am • 12:30pm • 4:00pm • 5:30pm  
7:00pm • 8:30pm

\*with sign language interpreters

**Confessions** are available during all  
the Masses

**Adoration Chapel** - open daily from  
7:00am to 8:00pm

## PARISH OFFICE & RELIGIOUS STORE HOURS

**Monday to Friday (except Thursday)**  
8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 6:00pm

**Thursday:**  
8:00am - 11:30am • 12:30pm - 4:00pm

**Saturday:**  
8:00am - 12:00pm • 1:00pm - 5:00pm

DECEMBER 2013



The Season of Advent is once again upon us. Coincidentally or not, Advent this year began on the very first day of December, a good reminder to us that December is not yet Christmas but is the beginning of a most precious but often-unappreciated moment called "advent". The word "advent" means "coming" or "presence." In the ancient world it indicated the visit of the king or emperor to a province; Christians use it to refer to the coming of God, to his presence in the world. While advent merely covers a period spanning four weeks, it actually tells of that very long period<sup>[1]</sup> of waiting that mankind had to undergo before the visible presence of God was made manifest (the birth of Jesus). In essence, during Advent, the Church would like us, not only to recall the historical events leading to Christ's birth, but to understand and live its meaning in our present lives.

One powerful way to understand and live the meaning of Advent is to look at the persons who embody the season: Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary. These three key persons are the embodiment of the essential themes of Advent, namely, longing and expectation, repentance and conversion and intimacy and loving presence. Isaiah is 'the prophet of Advent': his book in the Old Testament reveals the grand vision of God "on that day", the coming of the Messiah. Through this book and the many other messianic prophecies read during the Advent liturgy, expectation and longing is stirred in us for the real

arrival of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist is the 'man of Advent'. He embodies the other important aspect of the season, that of penitence and conversion to God. Together with joy and longing is the desire to get rid of our sinful selves and embrace the grace brought by the coming Messiah. And Mary, our Mother, is the 'woman of Advent'. It is through her that God destined the cooperation of a woman in the work of redemption. Through God's grace, she was immaculately conceived<sup>[2]</sup> and thus became a worthy dwelling place and nurturer of the awaited Messiah. Being both the mother of God and His lowly handmaid who submitted to His will (Mary's fiat), she is intimately linked to God's plan of creation and redemption.

As we attend and participate in the Advent liturgy, let Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary accompany us to a better understanding and living of the season of Advent.

Your humble pastor,

*Fr. Ting Miciano, SDB*

<sup>[1]</sup> If we base this period of waiting in terms of the genealogy of Jesus (Mt. 1:1-16) starting all the way from Adam and Eve, the wait took 4,000 years!

<sup>[2]</sup> The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is on December 8, but the mass with the special readings in honor of the Immaculate Conception of Mary will be celebrated this year on December 9.



St. John Bosco Parish, Makati  
City, Philippines

&

St. John Bosco Parish Makati  
Activities in Photos & Videos



# ADVENT 2013: Christ is Coming Home

by Fr. Christopher Kennedy, SDB

## ADVENT IS HOMECOMING (First Sunday – 1 December 2013)

Megan McKenna speaks of Advent as a time of “homecomings” which can set the tone for all we need to do to make sure that we are on the right wavelength spiritually during this holy season. We could so easily go through this period and only add to our waistlines and not to our spiritual growth!

Megan McKenna says: “It is homecoming, both ours and God’s, being welcomed back after a long absence. It is the memory of the coming of the child that was the Peace of God so long ago in history and the return of the child into our world in our hearts this year.”

Joined to the readings, especially those of Year A, we have three “homecomings” – the past, the present and our end. It begins with the past, righting the wrongs: the wrongs of war, of peoples divided and separated calling one another enemy instead of friend, and the toll this hate takes on all peoples and the earth itself.

We begin with the first lesson from Isaiah: the need “to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks;” how not to raise our swords against others; and how to stop training for war ever again. (cf. Isaiah) As Megan McKenna says, “it is a lesson of raising food instead of hate as the substance that is the core to all human living. It is a lesson that repairs broken covenants and restores the possibility of life truly lived in freedom and hope for all peoples.” Raising food is symbolic of doing something that is positive and ‘nourishing.’

The homecoming is a repeat performance – God tried it before in Noah’s time, though others did not heed the warnings.

*\* Megan McKenna, is a New York-based theologian, Catholic Spiritual writer, storyteller and retreat lecturer.*

Will it be the same this year for us? Or have we learned some things from the past? God is coming! The Son of Man is coming! The reign of peace is coming! The moment it arrives is going to be quick, definitive, and decisive, and it will come for everyone. So what are we to do?

The first task is: Stay awake! This is the moment when it begins, when the world begins to turn toward home and everything we know changes. God is coming and he’s creeping up on us like a thief breaking into our house and into our world. Advent is a guard dog barking loudly and rousing us from a sound sleep. There is an intruder in the house, in the world, and perhaps in our lives. Are we aware? Today on the first Sunday of Advent we are warned: throw open the door! Rouse everyone in the house! Roll out the red carpet. Get busy with preparations. Sweep the house and be on your toes. God is so close!

Are we ready to heed these warnings? Or are we going to put our eternal preparations aside for at least another year? The reality check is: the time is now. Not in the future, for the future depends on how we celebrate the NOW. As all roads literally lead towards home at this time of the year, our spiritual road must be the same, for it asks us to really come home to ourselves and put in order what is misplaced. Advent 2013 is another gift from God. Let us accept the challenge!



## A SPIRITUAL PARADIGM SHIFT (Second Sunday – 8 December 2013)

This Sunday two prophets are shouting at us: Isaiah and John the Baptist. It is all about what we call, in our modern lingo, as a change of paradigm. The change that the prophets want is related to moving towards what today’s world really needs: justice and peace. And the new prophet in the person of Pope Francis has just reminded us of this in his recent letter. As Megan McKenna says, “all adversaries and enemies become friends, symbolized in Isaiah as the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf and the lion cub, the cow and the bear, the cobra and the child all in harmony. And there is no harm, no violence: only peace!” This is a beautiful program for all of us as we try to apply the Christian values in our lives and in our homes, where we have to admit at times there are instances of injustice and lack of peace.

But if we are to transform this vision into reality we will have to work on change, repentance, restoring order in our lives and in our world, as well as healing wounds. This is John the Baptist’s call that will be finished by the fire of the Holy Spirit. It will have to begin with confession and acknowledgement of our sins, as well as a wholehearted turning in the way of the coming Lord. It is in fact an untying of the knots and dead ends that consume our lives needlessly.

Megan McKenna sums up this Sunday beautifully: “The Second Sunday turns the eye of John the Baptist upon us. It is not the eye of the Son of Man, but it burns and exposes us surely. It is time to give some evidence that we mean to reform. We, us, not any other! It starts here, in our families, jobs, politics, economics, generosity or lack thereof, truthfulness and lies.” What a program for this week!



## TELL JOHN WHAT YOU SEE

(Third Sunday – 15 December 2013)



The Gospel of this Third Sunday of Advent has John's disciples coming to Jesus. John is in prison and in his predicament he has some doubts as to who Jesus really is. And when they ask Jesus if he is the Messiah or should they wait for another, Jesus tells them to tell John about the effects of the Messiah's presence: the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

There may be a bit of skepticism in our lives too. We ask questions but we do not follow them up. We do not bring them to Jesus. This Sunday is a day of encouragement. We have only to look around us and see the signs of Jesus' presence in our midst. This day is for rejoicing, for summoning our courage, and singing out to

gether because the earth is being remade and refashioned into a place of springs and flowing waters and a new garden. The symbolism is for our lives too. This has to be a time of courage in a world that in so many ways has forgotten Jesus and his values. What do I do to make sure that the blind see? That the lame walk? That the gospel is preached to the poor? Jesus and his effects on the people of his day have to be replicated in our lives. This is *Gaudete* (rejoice) Sunday, and we have a lot to rejoice about. One outstanding figure that Jesus indirectly asks us to imitate is the figure of John the Baptist. His credentials in the eyes of Jesus are second to none. Read the Gospel of this Sunday again and just ask yourself what characteristics of John apply to me, and which of these do I need to work on in my life?

## GOD WITH US!

(Fourth Sunday – 22 December 2013)

Today, the last Sunday of Advent there is a birth announcement: the child's name will be Emmanuel, God with us. He will dwell among us, sojourn with us, coming home and staying with us, forever. What a promise, what a gift! He comes to a world that in many ways has forgotten God, or at least does not want God to interfere in its day to day life. But the world in which the Savior is born is a completely different world than the powers to be would like to see.

God is born as a child to a poor couple. He is born into poor conditions in a remote part of the world. God does not do things with fanfare or trumpet blasts. This is a special child born of the Spirit of God and whose very presence brings holiness and hope to those who long for his coming.

We meet today two people whose lives were literally taken over by God: Joseph the dreamer who will stake on the words of God's messenger, and Mary who is entrusted to Joseph by the Spirit. He is

to call the child Jesus, which means one who will save his people from their sins. For Joseph, the just man, who has lived his life on visions and dreams of the prophets, this dream is the culmination of the all. He simply awakes and obeys the angel's words and takes Mary into his heart and his home: Mary as his wife and the child she is carrying by the power of the Spirit.

Our story could have a similar twist to it, provided, like Joseph, we believe in God's dream for us. Because of the child born for us God is making our dreams come true as well. God will be made flesh among us, and in our hearts and lives too. This can only happen if we have the belief and obedience of Joseph and Mary. Now it is our turn, our time to live and let the life of God dwell in us. It is almost time. God is coming home to us. All we have to do is to open the door of our lives and let him in! Our story is even better. God has made, is making, the dreams and the visions come true. Justice, peace, and hope are now a person, a child to be born in our midst. God will be made flesh among us and in our hearts and in our history again,



by belief and obedience as once it happened to Joseph and Mary. Now it is our turn, our time to live, to hang on for dear life, for a dearer life and to let God dwell with us. It is almost time. God is coming home to us. Open the door and let him in.

It is time for us to listen – and then act! Ahaz in today's first reading did not listen because he had made other plans. Perhaps we too could ignore God's plans to dwell in our lives if we do not pay heed to his word – and the Word made flesh!



The title of these reflections on the four Sundays of Advent could well have been, "Chris is Coming Home", as the author, Fr. Christopher Kennedy, SDB continues to heal and recover after months of hospital confinement. His agreeing to write again for Simbahay after an absence of almost eight months is part of this homecoming. We are honored and grateful and pleased with our "pasalubong" from our favorite contributor and Simbahay Editorial Board member of all time. **WELCOME HOME, FR. CHRIS!**

Fr. Chris, former Salesiana Publishers Inc., Editor-in-Chief and SJB Parish Rector, is currently the Spiritual Moderator of Don Bosco Seminary in Parañaque City.





DIVINE LIVELIHOOD

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WE BUILD COMMUNITIES. WE BUILD LIVES.

Every person dreams of having his or her own house, a home where one feels safe and secure, a place where children can learn and play, a haven where we can grow old in contentment.

It was with the vision of a world where everyone has a decent place to live that an American businessman, Millard Fuller founded Habitat for Humanity, and in 1988, that vision found its way to the Philippines.



Helping rebuild  
after Yolanda



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# VIVA, la VIRGEN de GUADALUPE!

By Vi P. Hernandez

We celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the secondary patroness of the Philippines and protectress of the unborn children, on December 12.

"It's like Baclaran!" was my first impression, as I got off the city bus. Stores and stalls selling everything from *recuerdos y zapatos* (souvenirs and shoes) to *comidas y bebidas* (food and drink) line both sides of a pedestrian area leading to *La Villa* ("the town", the Basilica compound). A brisk five-minute walk away, behind a tall fence, towers an ancient brick church – the old Basilica, with its imposing yellow dome, twin bell-towers and ornate facade.

As more and more people were streaming towards the gates, I qualified my first impression, "It's like Baclaran on a first Wednesday!" Excitement mounted with each step until I finally reached the gates of *La Villa*. Plaza Mariana with its many churches and chapels, a baptistery and a small hill reminds one of Marian shrine complexes in Lourdes and Fatima, only this time, the hordes of pilgrims were predominantly Mexican, and the atmosphere familiarly "*fiesta*". Many were carrying around big and small images, even altars and *carozas* of their beloved patroness, reminiscent of Filipino devotees cradling treasured *Sto. Niños* in their arms during the January processions. Suddenly, I felt at home!

As I turned around, there it was, the new Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe! My eyes were immediately drawn to the large Spanish inscription above the main door "*No Estoy Yo Aqui, Que Soy tu Madre?*" (Am I not here who is your Mother?)

Misty-eyed, I whispered in gratitude, "*Mama Maria*, your *peregrina* (pilgrim) is finally here, a week late, but as promised, *estoy aqui!*" I hurried into the new Basilica and was astounded for it was huge, cavernous, yet packed to its SRO capacity of about 10,000. In a prominent place of honor above the altar, hangs San Juan Diego's famous

*tilma* (mantle) miraculously preserved through the centuries with its imprint of the Blessed Mother's image (her only known photograph – developed in color in some celestial darkroom).

Somehow, I managed to participate in the lauds and Masses and even joined in the rousing cheers of "*Viva El Cristo Rey, Viva Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Viva!*" which reverberated throughout *La Villa* that day. It was the Feast of Christ the King. From 1926-1929, tens of thousands were tortured and killed for the Faith, including the 25 Mexican Martyrs canonized in 2000 by Pope John Paul II. "*Viva El Cristo Rey, Viva Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe!*" was their battle cry, then and now, fiery and full-bodied like their *tequila*. How providential that I was late for a week, or I would have missed all these.

I spent the rest of the day visiting the churches and chapels of *La Villa de Guadalupe*, gazing awestruck at the beloved image on the *tilma* while standing on walkalators hidden beneath the new Basilica's sanctuary, shopping for *recuerdos*, taking gigabytes of pictures, and finally, huffing and puffing my way to the top of Tepeyac Hill. There a small church stands where the Blessed Virgin first appeared in 1531 to the peasant, Juan Diego. By sundown, while taking in the view of the Basilicas of Guadalupe, this tired yet extremely blissful *peregrina* couldn't thank her gracious Hosts enough for the sense of peace, joy and love that had enfolded her like a *tilma* throughout her pilgrimage. *Gracias, el Cristo Rey. Gracias, Madre mia de Guadalupe!*

"Hear me and understand well that nothing should frighten or grieve you. Let not your heart be disturbed. Do not fear that sickness, nor any other sickness or anguish. Am I not here, who is your Mother? Are you not under my protection? Am I not your health? Are you not happily within my fold? What else do you wish? Do not grieve nor be disturbed by anything." —Message of Our Lady of Guadalupe







*Simbang  
Gabi 2013*

**Simbang Gabi - December 15 & 22 8:30PM**  
**Simbang Gabi - December 16 to 23 8:00PM**  
**Misa de Aguinaldo - December 16 to 24 4:30AM**

**Christmas Eve December 24**

**Children's Mass (Panunuluyan) 8:00PM**  
**Parish Christmas Eve Mass 10:00PM**

**New Year's Eve December 31**

**Parish New Year's Eve Mass 8:00PM**



**ANG KORONA  
NG ADBIYENTO**

**ni Myrna B Caquilala**

Tuwing sasapit ang Pasko, lagi nating nakikita ang Korona ng Adbiyento o tinatawag na Advent Wreath. Narito ang isang maikling talaan ng kahulugan nito.

- **Kulay** – *Lila* (Violet o Purple). Ito'y nagpapaalala sa bawat Kristiyano na magsisi sa kanilang pagkamakasalan at magbalik-loob sa Diyos.

- **Korona at Kandila ng Adbiyento**

**Korona** – ang pabilog na hugis ay nagpapahayag ng Pagdating ng Panginoon noong siya'y nagkatawang-tao, ngayon sa pamamagitan ng kanyang mga biyaya, at sa hinaharap na puspos ng kaluwalhatian sa wakas ng panahon.

**Mga Luntiang Dahon** – ay sagisag ng buhay-na-pag-asa ng pagliligtas na dulot ng Diyos Ama sa pamamagitan ni Hesus.

**Mga Kandila** – ang nagsisilbing paalaala sa apat na Linggo ng Adbiyento na isa-isang sisindihan sa bawat linggo. Kaya mula sa kadiliman ng kasalanan, unti-unting magliliwanag ang *pag-asa ng kaligtasan* hanggang sa pagdating ng araw ng Pagsilang kay Hesus.

## DECEMBER 2013 CALENDAR

01 Sun	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent
03 Tue	St. Francis Xavier
04 Wed	St. John Damascene
06 Fri	St. Nicholas
07 Sat	St. Ambrose
08 Sun	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent
09 Mon	Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception
11 Wed	Advent Recollection – 7 pm, Fr. Armand Robleza, SDB • Confessions
12 Thu	Our Lady of Guadalupe
13 Fri	St. Lucy
14 Sat	St. John of the Cross
15 Sun	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent/ Gaudete Sunday / Start of Evening Simbang Gabi Masses 8:30pm
16 Mon	Start of the Misa de Aguinaldo 4:30 am / National Youth Day Simbang Gabi 8 pm / San Lorenzo 5 am
21 Sat	St. Peter Canisius
22 Sun	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent • No 6 am Mass
24 Tue	Christmas Eve Mass – Church and San Lorenzo –10 pm
25 Wed	The Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord • Sunday Mass Schedule but no 6 am Mass
26 Thu	St. Stephen
27 Fri	St. John the Apostle
28 Sat	Feast of the Holy Innocents
29 Sun	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
31 Tue	St. Sylvestre, Pope • Evening Mass for New Year – Church and San Lorenzo 8 pm

**Sick Visitation** – Thursdays 9:00AM

**Holy Hour** – Thursdays 6:30PM

**Medical & Dental** – Sundays 2:00PM

Visit our website for the complete Dec 2013 Calendar  
<http://sjbmakati.com/parish-events.html>

Tatlong kandilang kulay Lila ang isa-isang sisindihan para sa *Una, Ikalawa, at Ikaapat* na Linggo ng Adbiyento. Ang mga kandilang ito ang magpapaalala na tayo'y magsisi sa ating mga kasalanan at magbalik-loob sa Diyos.

May isang kandilang kulay Rosas ay sisindihan sa *Ikatlong* Linggo ng Adbiyento – **Linggo ng Kagalakan** (*Gaudete Sunday*). Ipinahahayag sa Linggong ito ang lubos na kagalakang nagpapahayag sa nalalapit na pagdating ng Panginoon.



The four circular illustrations are arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left circle shows two stylized fish, one yellow and one orange, swimming in a green pond with blue waves. The top-right circle shows a white sheep with a red collar standing in a field of red flowers. The bottom-left circle shows a bright orange and yellow campfire burning on grey rocks. The bottom-right circle shows a hot air balloon with a red and orange patterned basket floating over blue waves.

one for each of the first 24 days of December. Instead of images of Christ's ancestors, the symbols (usually hand-crafted) hanging from the branches of modern Jesse Trees represent the various promises of God from the Creation to the Birth of Christ. Some families add one ornament each day to their Jesse Trees, starting on 1 December and read the relevant Bible story together, thereby providing their children a fun yet meaningful way to prepare for Christmas.

December 1	Creation	sun, moon, stars, animals, earth (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-4)
December 2	Adam and Eve	Tree of Life, man, woman (Genesis 2:7-9, 18-24)
[...]		
December 4	Noah	ark, animals, dove, rainbow (Genesis 6:5-8, 13-22; 7:17, 23, 24; 8:1, 6-22)
[...]		
December 23	Christ as Emmanuel	Chalice and Host (Isaiah 7:14; 33:22)
Christmas Eve	The Nativity	Mary holding the Infant Jesus, with Star of Bethlehem over their heads (Luke 2:1-20)

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