

The First Sunday of Advent / Year A –
26/27 November 2016 – 5:00 PM –
50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration of
Joseph and Donna Duve; Collection for Good Neighbors
after all Weekend Masses
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Isaiah 2:1-5

- “In days to come . . . All nations shall stream toward it; many peoples shall come and say: “Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways and we may walk in his paths.” . . . For from Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. . . . They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; . . . let us walk in the light of the Lord!” – *The Lord’s coming signaled by a conversion among humanity . . .*

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 122 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

Romans 13:11-14

- “You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed; the night is advanced, the day is at hand. Let us throw off the works of darkness and **put on the armor of light**; . . . But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**,”

GOSPEL:

MATTHEW 24:37-44

- “ “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man. . . . Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. . . . So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” – “. . . *reminds the Church that anticipating the end of the world is as deep in our theology as looking for the infant in swaddling clothes, even*

*Page 2 - The First Sunday of Advent / Year A - 26/27 November 2016 - 5:00 PM - 50th
Wedding Anniversary Celebration of Joseph and Donna Duve; Collection for Good
Neighbors after all Weekend Masses - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community -
HOMILY*

though it is not as consoling. Vigilance for the Second Coming should be part of our theology at all times . . . final judgment feels so arbitrary . . . “one will be taken, and one will be left.” . . . The Church’s scriptural tradition has a good balance of consolation and warning. . . . “

I. Looking back over the month of November, thus far, not including perhaps individual and personal experiences and events . . . it has been a pretty eventful month . . .

Throughout the month of October and ending on November 2nd . . . 2016 World Series ended November 2nd . . . many rooted for and followed the Cleveland Indians as they not only made their way as the American League champions to the World Series, but played hard at trying to become World Series Champions . . . the first time in 48 years . . .

For movie fans . . . the latest “superhero” movie, “Doctor Strange”, premiered November 4th and many individuals found their way to the theaters . . . this, along with the latest J.K. Rowling adventure . . . a “pre-Harry Potter” film, titled “Strange Beasts”, which premiered November 18th . . .

Beyond a doubt, our Presidential Election occupied many conversations and minds . . . not just here, but throughout the world, and after many, many long months of enduring what appeared to be non-stop “politics”, was brought to a conclusion of sorts on November 8th . . .

*Page 4 - The First Sunday of Advent / Year A - 26/27 November 2016 - 5:00 PM - 50th
Wedding Anniversary Celebration of Joseph and Donna Duve; Collection for Good
Neighbors after all Weekend Masses - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community -
HOMILY*

Add to this the Cleveland Browns playing the Pittsburgh Steelers last Sunday, November 20th . . . and despite the fact that this was one more loss, certainly drew in sports die-hards who watched, offered advice to either the television or out-loud at the game and then certainly contributed to many conversations following the game . . . perhaps even still talking about the Cleveland team.

Of course, what would November and the Thanksgiving Holiday be without the hype and the news and the activity surrounding “Black Friday” . . . “Small Business Saturday” and the upcoming “Cyber Monday” . . .

I do believe that it would be a rare find if I, or anyone I know, came across any individual who has **not** contributed to a conversation about this handful of November happenings . . . after-all . . . there is more than enough here to talk about with someone . . . or dive in and participate in some way . . . that’s what we do . . . we share opinions . . . thoughts . . . experiences . . . ideas . . . good news and not-so-good news . . . sometimes with only those in our inner-circle where, perhaps we feel safe . . . sometimes with those beyond this circle where it is not so much about feeling “safe” as much as it is feeling passionately about something and we want others to know . . . We post on Facebook . . .

Instagram . . . all sorts of social media . . . Yes, there is a lot we all do in some way to share “stuff” . . .

So, think about it for a moment . . . whether it was anything to do with this list of events . . . or perhaps other events . . . other experiences that have crossed your path . . . think about what **you** have shared with someone or many someone’s this past month . . . this past week . . . even these past few days . . . and amid all that sharing . . . all that conversation . . . how often has that sharing included something about your relationship with the Lord . . . the one who wants to be at the center of our lives so that **all** of our life can be changed and transformed?

How often has that sharing included something about the importance of faith in your life . . . faith in a God that is so fundamental to who we are . . . to everything we say . . . to all that we do . . . faith in a God who is the source of light in our darkest moments . . . who opens the way for us to hope and, because of our relationship with God, fills us with joy even in our most trying situations?

How often over this past month . . . weeks . . . even the past few days have we shared with anyone how deeply . . . deeply grateful we are for our Catholic faith-life . . . how through our worship and participation in the sacraments we

find ourselves strengthened and filled with something that can't be labeled or described but we know that without it, we are empty and lost?

II. If in thinking back, we find ourselves saying, “rarely” . . . “not too often” . . . perhaps even “not at all” . . . the good news is that we can change that . . . and it is not as difficult to do as it may seem . . .

It may take a slight shift in how we approach our relationship with the Lord . . . how we understand faith and even our role in organized religion . . .

If we view all of this as “private” . . . between me and God . . . then, it will always remain private . . . we will never make the move from focusing only on saving our own individual souls to working to help bring that opportunity for salvation to others . . .

Our relationship with God has never been intended to be a “private” affair . . . personal . . . yes . . . but never private . . . everything God has done throughout salvation history has always resulted in some very public action taken . . . not only on the part of the Lord but on the part of those He encountered . . . If this were not the case . . . you and I would not even be here . . .

Isaiah, Prophet of God, did not speak to a single individual . . . Isaiah prophesied to the entire nation of Israel . . . and the words he spoke were words of promise . . . of hope . . . of assurance and consolation but also words of **action** . . . **“Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain” . . . “O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”**

Saint Paul did not simply speak to one person . . . but to all who had come to believe in the Lord Jesus . . . **all** were called to **“awake from sleep”** . . . be aware that **“salvation is nearer now than when we first believed”** . . . **all** were reminded to **“put on the Lord Jesus Christ”** . . .

And in the Gospel . . . when Jesus spoke . . . he spoke to his disciples . . . and called **them** to be prepared . . . grooming them to go out and prepare others . . . The Lord’s call to action . . . his message of salvation was not just to an individual or even a few individuals but to all who, while he was alive . . . would encounter him and, following his death and resurrection . . . and the gift of the Spirit . . . become **the** message that others would have to continue . . .

III. Advent is a new beginning for all of us . . . the great

season of reminding us and others why we believe what we believe . . . why we speak what we speak and do what we do . . . It is that time of year that leads to remembering God wanted nothing more than to join heaven and earth together and did so in Jesus Christ . . . Christ . . . born in time but remaining with us in His Word . . . His Sacrament . . . in all joined to Him in Baptism . . .

Putting Christ back into Christmas . . . or making Jesus the reason for the Season isn't something any of us needs to do . . . **Christ** is already in **Christmas** and **Jesus** will always be the reason for the Season . . . God has seen to that . . . If we really want others to know this . . . it will take more than a bumper sticker or a Facebook post . . . It will take each of us putting Jesus Christ at the center of who we are . . . choosing Jesus Christ to be the very core of our lives . . .

We are being blessed with more time this week . . . how much . . . none of us knows . . . but, it becomes a graced opportunity to help others know something more about Jesus Christ . . . something more about God's intimate action in the lives of all human persons . . . something more about the good things that Christ gives us in our Catholic faith . . . may we use this blessing wisely and generously . . . sharing with others what truly matters .

*Page 9 - The First Sunday of Advent / Year A - 26/27 November 2016 - 5:00 PM - 50th
Wedding Anniversary Celebration of Joseph and Donna Duve; Collection for Good
Neighbors after all Weekend Masses - Our Lady of Victory Parish Community -
HOMILY*

. . words and actions that will help others to see how,
when the Lord is at the center of our lives . . . life is
changed and transformed in ways only God can do . . .