



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

28TH/29TH NOVEMBER 2020



Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:
Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council
E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie Website: www.stagathasparish.ie

Jesus I Trust in You

POPE FRANCIS HOMILY EDITED

Today's liturgy invites us to live the first "important Season", which is that of Advent, the first of the liturgical year, Advent, which prepares us for Christmas, and therefore it is a time of expectation and a time of Hope. Saint Paul (1 Cor 1:3-9) indicates the object of our expectation which is the "manifestation [revelation] of the Lord" (v. 7) and invites us to prepare ourselves for the encounter, for being with the Lord for Eternity. And this definitive encounter will come at the end of the world.

UNIVERSAL JUDGE AT THE END OF TIME

Our God will make us wait a few moments in the dark to allow our expectation to ripen, but He never disappoints. He came at a precise moment in history and became Man to take on our sins - the feast of the Nativity commemorates Jesus' First Coming in the historical moment. He will come at the end of times as Universal Judge. Every day He is at the door of our heart knocking. He came to Bethlehem, He will come at the end of the world, but every day He comes to us, so that, with His grace, we might accomplish Good. Be careful, look at what you feel in your heart when the Lord knocks.

DO NOT LOSE HOPE OR SPIRITUAL ENTHUSIASM

In this pandemic do not lose hope or risk falling into closure and apathy [lack of interest]. Today's Psalm suggests: "Our soul waits for the Lord: He is our help and our shield. Our heart is glad in Him, because we trust in His holy Name" (Ps 33:20-21). That is, the soul awaiting, confidently for the Lord, allowing us to find comfort and courage in the dark moments of our lives. Our courage and trust are born of hope which is that virtue that leads us ahead, looking at the encounter with Christ. Advent is a continuous call to Hope, reminding us that God is present, to lead us to our ultimate goal in its fullness, which is to live with Jesus in Heaven. May Mary Most Holy, the woman of expectation, accompany our steps at the beginning of this new liturgical year, and help us to fulfil the task of Jesus' disciples to account for the Hope that is in us (1 Pet 3:15). Vatican News.

ANNUAL PUBLIC MASS FOR THE DEAD: TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 5:30pm

Public Annual Mass for the Dead will be held at 5:30pm on the 8th December 2020, on the Solemnity Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady. Candles will be already placed on the Altar Rails representing the deceased souls, in order, to reduce foot traffic. Everybody is now obliged to wear a Mask please and thank you. Families will be notified. May they rest in Peace.

CHANGE OF WEEKDAY MASS TIMES - FROM 10AM TO 11AM

Because all the neighbouring Churches celebrate their weekday Masses at the same time of 10am, it offers no local choice for people, if they miss 10am Mass. Pope Francis is encouraging people to attend weekday Masses, in order to reduce large crowds assembling for Sunday Masses. This is in line with Government restrictions on numbers. In light of this encouragement, and in conjunction with the Parish Pastoral Council, and present weekday Mass attendees, the weekday Masses will be changed in St. Agatha's Church from 10am to 11am. This will begin on Monday 7th December 2020. This will also be in keeping with the majority of families who request 11am for Funeral Masses. We will give it a trial period and see how it suits all the weekday Mass attendees. Thank you for your cooperation. Saturday 5:30pm Vigil and Sunday 11:30am Masses will remain the same. It will just be 11am Monday Mornings - Saturday Mornings. Thank you

THE TWOFOLD COMING OF CHRIST AND THE CALL TO STAY AWAKE

Today begins our Advent Sunday which prepares us for a new Church year and the remembrance of when Jesus first came into the world at Christmas. At the same time we must be spiritually awake and prepared for His anticipated Second Coming as Divine Judge. The Latin word *Adventus* means *the Coming*. In today's Gospel (Mark 13:33-37), Jesus warns us, *to be on our guard, stay awake, because we never know when the time will come. If he comes unexpectedly, he must not find us asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!* Jesus is urging us to face the spiritual realities of this life and the divine reality of what will happen to us in the next Life.

SECOND COMING OF THE RISEN CHRIST WILL BE MORE GLORIOUS

The Church preaches of the Two Comings of Christ. The First Coming we remember every Christmas. His Second Coming is yet to happen, but it will be much more Glorious than the First. The First Coming saw Him wrapped in swaddling clothes in a Manger and was marked by Divine Patience, to fulfil His Plan of Love. He taught us by gentle persuasion. However, His Second Coming, will be very different. He will be clothed in Light, as in a garment of Glory and escorted by an army of Angels, bringing Divine Judgement on the world. Whether we like it or not, we will be subjected to the Crown of His Kingdom by necessity.

OUR HEARTS ARE RESTLESS UNTIL THEY REST IN HIM

Jesus wants us to celebrate Christmas, but at the same time, He wants us to look beyond the First Coming and await the Second, by preparing our souls for that Last Day of Judgement. He is asking us today to be spiritually awake and to wait in the **Ways of Hope, Love, Joy and Peace**. In waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus, we should be full of excitement, longing to see Him face to face. Is He not the Love of our life? The waiting is important because, during our life's pilgrimage, we are actually incomplete as human and spiritual beings. St. Augustine said, *You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You*. Some people do not realise it, but we all have a need that only God can fulfil, because He created us. Advent reminds us that our life, is a time to open our hearts and invite Jesus to bring us to completion in Him. This is why we pray at Mass to live our lives: *through Him, and with Him and in Him*. Without Him, who is Love and Mercy, we go it alone, resulting in the soul getting lost and never finding its way to Heaven. It has to be His Way or no way. We must *waken up*, be wise and follow the Star in our hearts.

ADVENT WREATH AND FIVE CANDLES

The Advent Wreath has five different coloured Advent candles in it. Three Purple, one Pink (Rose) and one White. The circle of the Evergreen Wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the Eternity of God (Alpha and Omega). Four of the advent candles represent the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. There are three purple candles, one pink and one white. The colour Purple symbolises Repentance and Humility and match the colour of the Mass Vestments in Advent. This is why the Priest should wear purple Vestment's for a Funeral Mass, because he, in union with the family and friends present, are praying that even if the soul showed no repentance before their death, we implore God, in all humility, to show divine mercy because of their Faith. If we think the soul has gone straight to Heaven, then it would be a Canonisation Mass. Advent is a sacred time given to us every year to repent for our sins. That is why Confession is always recommended in the Christmas Advent Season.

CANDLES OF HOPE AND THE WAY OF LOVE

The First Purple coloured Advent Candle lit on Sunday 29th December, symbolises **Hope (Trust)**, which we have in Christ and His Good News. The Eucharistic Prayer II in our Mass today says; *Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the Hope of the Resurrection, and all who have died in Your Mercy: welcome them into the Light of Your Face*. The Second Purple Advent Candle lit next Sunday the 6th December, symbolising that Christ is the **Way** through practicing **Love**. The World is lost in sin and Christ is the Light sent into the World to show us the **Way** out of Darkness, by exercising **Love** and **Forgiveness**.

CANDLES OF JOY, PEACE AND CHRIST WHO IS THE LIGHT

The Third Rose or Pink Advent Candle lit on the 13th December indicates that the only ever-lasting **Joy** to be found in this world is through Christ. All other joy is fleeting and does not last. The Fourth Purple Advent Candle, lit on the 20th December, represents Jesus coming to bring us **Peace**. Without Christ there is no Peace in this world. The Fifth White Advent Candle, lit on Friday Christmas Day, represents **Christ Himself** who is the Paschal Light and born to Save us from our Sins. He invites us to join Him as *coheirs in eternal Life*, someday, but to get spiritually ready now!. God bless, Fr Brendan