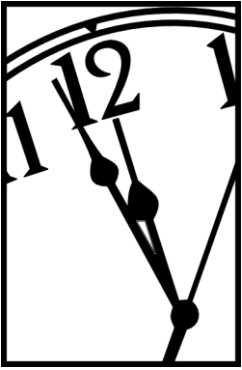


IT'S NEVER TOO LATE



Perhaps it's just before Mass on this Fourth Sunday of Advent and you have come early to be in the church and prepare yourself for the celebration of the Eucharist. You've said a prayer to say 'hello' to God in his house, and now you've settled back into the pew to read the bulletin article. Or, maybe you're reading this article at home after a busy day with family and you noticed the bulletin sitting there but you hadn't opened it. Well, the grace

of God works in many varied and wonderful ways. And if you are just reading this article realizing that your life has been so hectic, so busy, so preoccupied that you haven't really had a chance or taken the time to prepare yourself for the coming of Christ this Advent season, then I've got some great news for you... It's never too late!

One of the most reassuring and tremendous truths about our Catholic Faith is that it is never too late to come to Christ ***provided that in this present moment you are willing and open to do something about it!***

The importance placed upon 'today' in the life of the Church and in the lives of all those who profess faith in Jesus Christ is paramount. "If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts." (Hebrews 3:15) And, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) The word "hour" in sacred scripture most often connotes the time of evil but the word "day" in scripture usually means the time of salvation – the Day of the Lord. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen used to say that "The Devil has his hour but God has His Day."

Next Sunday in the Christmas readings we will hear the words of the angel: "This day, in the City of David, is born for you a Saviour!"

So, if this Advent Season has found you, on this 4th Sunday of Advent, unprepared spiritually for Jesus' coming to you in history, (2000 years ago); in mystery (the ways in which Christ comes to you now); and at the end of your life and the end of time itself – take heart and use this moment in time to prepare, beginning with that part of you that is given to Christ first by every living soul that ever came to him: your heart.

If this time of Advent has left you feeling unready for Christ's coming, perhaps this prayer I just wrote will give you the words to invite the Lord into the Advent and Christmas of your life.

**Lord Jesus Christ,
even if I know I have not been waiting for you,
I do believe and know that you are waiting for me
and that you always have.
Sometimes, I admit, that I live this life
you have given me as if it were only my own.
In this moment of grace,**

**this day of your coming to me,
I desire to once again give my life to you.
I am yours.**

Do with me what you will.

Help me to do for myself what I have not done.

Help me to open myself entirely to you.

**Help me to see this Christmas that salvation was born in me
when you came to earth and were born here,
in lowliness, poverty and nothingness.**

**May I strip myself of all that is unnecessary,
all that leads me away from you and your love,
so that I can, like Mary, like Joseph,
like John the Baptist and shepherds and kings,
say "yes" to your presence in me
and in this world.**

May I make a home in me for you

as you have made a home in you for me – forever!

Amen.

MY LOVE OF CLOCKS!

If any parishioner has a newer or older wind-up clock that no longer works, whether it be a mantle, wall or even grandfather clock, don't give it away or consider throwing it out – please give it to me.

You see, I love clocks. I love the soft tic-toc of a grandfather clock, the size and material of which lends itself greatly to the sound of its presence in a room. I love the quarter chimes and hourly strike of the hammers on the chime bars. It reminds me of the passing of time with its special moments and occasions that mark the time of my life followed by the resumption of the everyday ticking by of my life. We may be from different walks of life and times in history, Julius Caesar or a peasant farmer, but the clock of time with its second-by-second marking of time measure the passing of time that together composes our life.

I know that for some, particularly the young who don't like to hear the ticking of a clock, the sound of the tick, tick, ticking of time perhaps unconsciously reminds them that their life won't last forever, while the older we get we become perhaps more resigned to it. Perhaps if, as St. Paul says, "our lives are not our own but belong to God", then the ticking of time that I so love is for me like the gentle heartbeat of Jesus who lives and waits and is present to you and me.

If life is seen as a steady, progressing line forward, the ticking of a clock would seem disruptive, even annoying. Our lives ultimately end with a line we call "flat line", when the heart no longer beats and our life in these bodies is over and left behind.

I have many clocks in my house; large, small and some in between in size. Some chime all day at every quarter hour and on the hour and even chime 10 o'clock at night, and then remain silent but for their second-by-second ticking until 7:15 a.m. Others chime day and night and both I and the dogs don't even seem to notice anymore, except if one of them stops.

All my clocks, like my life itself, have been designed to require winding once a week, like Sunday Mass is to the faithful Catholic. Once a week I go from room to room, from mantle clocks to wall clocks to grandfather clocks to do the pleasant task of raising weights, winding springs and adjusting pendulums so that the passing of time, mine and everyone else's, is precise and correct. And each hour of the waking day for me I hear what reminds me of European cities at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday night – a multitude of bells ringing.

There are many different chime tunes on clocks, the most common being Westminster, St. Michael and Mt. Whittington, but I love the chimes on one of my clocks that is rather rare yet so beautiful – Winchester, from the historic Catholic Cathedral in Hampshire, England which dates back to its founding in the 7th Century. The chimes have been ringing in the bell tower of that great cathedral since 1079 and the words that the bells ring out every hour are:

*"O Art Divine, exalted blessing!
Each celestial charm expressing!
Proudest gift of God bestow
Sweetest chimes that mortals know."*

St. Augustine of Hippo wrote,

“Time is a three-fold present:
The present as we experience it,
The past as a present memory,
and the future as a present expectation.

(Peace, Fr. Charles)

PARISH WEEKLY COLLECTION UPDATE:

- WEEKLY COST OF RUNNING OUR PARISH - \$6,196
- LAST SUNDAY'S OFFERTORY COLLECTION
- Envelopes, Loose bills and change - \$4,065.50
- Pre-Authorized Giving (PAP) - \$1,776.25 (December)
- ➔ TOTAL COLLECTION LAST WEEK: **\$5,841.75**
- Deficit in last week's collection: \$354.25*

MASS INTENTIONS

Tuesday, Dec. 20 - 8:30 am –
Wednesday, Dec. 21 - 7:00 pm – Brian Davidson+
Thursday, Dec. 22 - 8:30 am
Friday, Dec. 23 - 8:30 am – Hank Freve+
Christmas Eve, Saturday, Dec. 24 - 5:00 pm & 9 pm & Midnight
Christmas Day, Sunday, Dec. 25 - 11:00 am ONLY

OFFICE CLOSED THE WEEK OF MONDAY, DEC. 26 TO FRIDAY, DEC. 30, 2011. IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE (905) 655-3286 EXT. 8.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 28TH AT 6:30 P.M.
BRING YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD DISH & BOARD GAME
SIGN-UP SHEET AT WELCOME TABLE
MORE DETAILS TO COME**

Win Great Prizes!

It is time once again for the Friars' Student Writing Award. Students aged 14 – 18 are invited to write a five hundred-word essay on the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, celebrated January 18-25, 2012. The Theme for this coming year is “We Will All Be Changed.” (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58) First prize is an iPad 2 (16 GB), second prize is an Amazon Kindle Fire and third to sixth prizes are a one-year subscription to The Catholic Register and other prizes. Essays will be published in the Catholic Register. Deadline for entries is January 9, 2012. E-mail your essay to editor@catholicregister.org or FAX it to 416-934-3409. For further information call 416-934-3400, ext. 344 or 416-934-3410, ext. 404. Don't miss this opportunity! Please see poster on the Church bulletin board.

GREAT NEWS for Math Students (and their Parents!)

Grade 7 to 10 students in our Durham Catholic schools can receive free, online Math tutoring from Ontario-certified teachers! The tutoring is available Sunday to Thursday, from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm., at www.homeworkhelp.ilc.org Presentations to Grade 7 and 8 students about how to register and use the site are currently taking place. Grade 9 and 10 Math students received that training earlier this school year. For more info., email the Board's Learning Contact, Michele Faux, at HomeworkHelp@dcdsb.ca

THE LIGHT WEIGH

Would you like to learn how to eat the foods you enjoy while you lose weight? Would you like to make peace with food and get off the diet roller coaster? Give God a chance and rediscover the freedom from food you had as a small child. Join our group as we go through the Light Weigh Bible Study-Video Series at St. Bernadette's Parish Hall at 21 Bayly St, E. Ajax starting on Jan. 10, 2012 from 9:15 am - 11:30 am. Information Session is Dec. 13 at 9:15 am. This would make a great Christmas gift. Contact Susan Kennedy 905-427-6137 or gsmlministry@gmail.com for more info.

**“Fourth Day of Christmas” Dinner
At St. Mary Egypt Refuge
Wednesday, December 28, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.
Hospitality Days: December 27-29.
Please see poster on the Church Bulletin Board**

FAMILY FUN NIGHT