

HOLY  
COMFORTER-  
SAINT CYPRIAN  
PARISH

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WASHINGTON DC  
20003

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#### DATES

##### Bible Study

Wednesdays

11 am

@ school with

Fr. Gancayco

##### Bible Study

Wednesdays

7 pm

Parish Rectory

Msgr. Pope

##### Christmas Mass

##### Youth Pageant

December 24

6:00 p.m.

#### CONFIRMATION

##### DETAILS

Sunday, January 13

Candidates and

Sponsors to attend

##### Class

11 am Mass

And Rehearsal and

Reconciliation

After Mass until

3:00 pm

##### Confirmation

Monday, January

# Faith Formation

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8 DECEMBER 2007

“Rejoice in the Lord always!

The Lord is near.”

*Lisa M. Gulino*

Just last Sunday the prayers of the Church spoke of the triumph of Jesus as King. With one voice we prayed: “**Break the power of evil and make all things new** in your Son Jesus Christ, the King of the universe.” (*Opening Prayer, Christ the King*). And now the tone and tenor of our prayers shift to watching, waiting, longing for the coming of our Lord. The universal Church prays on the first Sunday of Advent “Increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may **find an eager welcome at his coming** and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven.” (*Opening Prayer First Sunday of Advent*)

What we have experienced in these last few weeks is the Church leading the disciples of Christ to remember that Christ will come again and that

our home is not of this world: we are citizens of heaven. With the Feast of Christ the King we ended the liturgical year and with the First Sunday of Ad-



vent we ring in the New Year.

The **Liturgical Year** may be compared to a most beautiful symphony. A **symphony** is the musical equivalent of a novel. A well written novel has character development, a building up of the story line and often a powerful ending which

may really be a beginning for the next book in the series. A symphony has movement as well. The symphony expresses many aspects of human nature; it builds in tension and drama; and, it highlights the various instruments of the orchestra. How is this image helpful?

Music played an important role in the worship offered by Israel to her God. The God of Israel lead them out of the land of Egypt into the promised land. Music in our Catholic liturgy tells the story of our exodus from sin and death to the life of grace in Our Lord Jesus. Our Liturgical Year and the celebration of the Mass reminds us of the promised land, our heavenly homeland, our entrance into the eternal land where “God will be all in all.” and “where every tear will be wiped away.” In the book

# Rejoice in the Lord... (cont'd page 1)

of Revelation we learn of the myriad of angels and those who have washed their clothes in the Blood of the Lamb, singing, "Holy, holy, holy Lord..."

In our own particular faith community here at Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian, we are blessed to reap the inspiration of songs written by a people who recognized the salvation story lived in their own experience of a lost homeland, slavery, and a quest for freedom. The way of God's people, a pilgrim people, is one which struggles with loss, pain, and suffering. We live in faith and hope of a freedom lived rightly and in accordance with God's law who has set himself as a "seal upon our heart,"

This is a time of year we become aware that **we stand at a privileged place**. We see both the "end" of the story as well as the "beginning". If we were to put this part of the Liturgical year to music one would hear rich sounds. These sounds would be orchestrated in such a way that the tension, beauty and excitement would build in a dramatic way blending sounds of triumph and quiet, glory and subtleness. The musical piece which expresses advent and Christmas is Handel's Messiah. This season of Advent is a time in which we can pause in the business of our life and ponder the Mysteries this season presents to us.

The Church's prayers, readings, and our own personal reflections upon the Word ought to help us recognize that we are part of this world, but are not of it. We are reminded that we are to help build the Kingdom of God: however, that the fulfillment of God is not in this life but the next. We are reminded that God took to himself our humanity and that we, through grace, share in the divine nature. Advent is that time of waiting and preparation, making straight the path of the Lord. Consider this, **what in our lives are stumbling blocks to allowing the grace of God to work more fully in and through us?** With hopeful hearts....*prepare the way of the Lord!*

## **PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD**

The Church, through the Scripture readings selected for the Advent season and the prayers she prayers over God's people call the faithful to remove anything, sins and bad habits, which keep us from allowing God to move and act more powerfully in our lives. St. Paul proclaims, "it is the hour for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer...let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light..." (Romans 13:12)

On the third Sunday of Advent the Church asks God to "prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow." Mortal sin brings spiritual death which is the loss of God's life in our souls. Venial sin brings sadness, a lack of joy and a spirit of discontent, and disquiet to our life and weakens our resistance against temptation and mortal sin.

Jesus has instituted a sacrament, an avenue of grace and life, for us to leave behind sin and guilt. This sacrament we call **Confession**. Through it we are reconciled with God, ourselves and one another. God forgives us our sins, brings us back to himself, restores our peace and heals our souls from the wounds inflicted by sin.

During this season of Advent **promise yourself that you and your family will experience the healing power of Confession**. Prepare your heart for the coming of Christ through this sacrament in which the blood of the Lamb cleanses our soul and makes us whole once again. Reflect on the words of St. John the Baptist, "*Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!*" (Mt 3:1)

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**Confession hours:** Saturday and Sunday 1/2 hour before each Mass.

**Advent Penance Service:** Friday, December 14th, 2007 @ 7:00 p.m. in the Church.