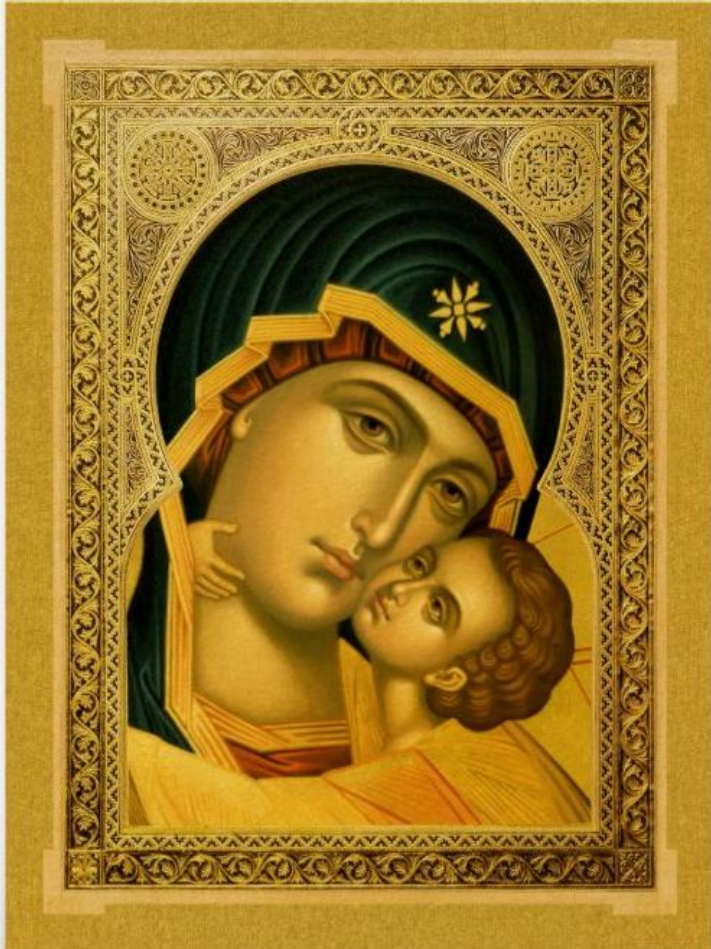


OUR LADY OF VICTORY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION CHAPEL

Advent - Christmas



Let us journey toward the Feast of the Nativity with joyous hearts!
Fast not only from food, but also from hatred and fear.
Bring forth goodness and kindness to all.
Forgive. Be generous.
In all things give glory to God.

ADORER NEWS

OLV Candle Memorials : Openings are available for the four altar candles that flank the Blessed Sacrament in the OLV Chapel. If you would like to reserve a month for a special intention or in memory of a loved one, contact Debbie at 518-249-7035 or Rebecca at 518-799-5535.

Your OLV Contact Information: As we head into the winter months, we may need to occasionally close the Chapel due to bad weather. These closures are usually only for *major weather events affecting both Greene and Columbia counties*. If your contact information has changed, please take a moment and **update it on your OLV account** so that you can stay informed of any necessary closures. If you need assistance, just call us.

Christmas Events: Note that the Advent and Christmas season brings an increase in special church events at St. Mary's that will either coincide with regular Chapel hours or necessitate a minor change in the schedule. We will post the schedule of events in the Chapel on the bulletin board so you're aware, and the WeAdoreHim.com online schedule will also reflect any changes.

Thursday Prayer Initiative for Priests: Please do remember to keep our priests, seminarians, and religious in special prayer every Thursday. Even the smallest prayer or sacrifice counts!

In Appreciation: One of the beautiful things about our OLV Adorer family is the way you have generously responded to substitute requests for one another. Your willingness to fill in permits our Chapel to be open as much as possible, ensuring a constant stream of adoration, supplication, and thanksgiving before the Lord Jesus and *never leaving Him alone*. May God bless you for your devotion and sacrifices! Let us resolve to always make our Chapel an uninterrupted fountain of grace and peace for all who enter.

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Cover icon: The beautiful icon on the cover is known as the Mother of God "Glykophilousa" icon. In Greek, "glyko-philousa" means "gently loving, sweetly kissing". Her contemplative gaze is both loving and somber, filled with tenderness and interior peace. May her prayers bring you into that same intimacy with her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ!

ADVENT

AS A

WAY OF LIFE



*On the first Friday in December 1944, as the Allies were bombing Germany and its defeat was only five months away, a young 38-year-old Jesuit priest was enduring his fifth month of solitary confinement in Berlin. He was awaiting trial for treason for his opposition to Hitler's government. Seated at a rough wooden table in his unheated prison cell, Alfred Delp awkwardly crossed one hand over the other to accommodate his handcuffs as he wrote the words, "**More, and on a deeper level than before, we really know this time that all of life is Advent.**"*

Advent had always been one of his favorite subjects. His final Advent meditations were written on slips of paper and smuggled out of Tegel Prison in Berlin as he faced death. His Advent sermons focused on four ways in which Advent "calls" us to an encounter with God:

- we are shaken awake;
- we are called to integrity and authenticity;
- we confess and proclaim our faith;
- we respond to God with reverent awe.

This approach to Advent is what Father Delp called an "Advent of the heart". It is more than preparing ourselves to celebrate the Christmas holiday. It is a spiritual program. As a Jesuit priest in Munich, Father Delp's artistry lay in taking words from everyday life and giving them a new spiritual interpretation. He appropriated familiar propaganda phrases, which were used to justify war and human rights violations, and redefined them in a call to truth and social justice. As homes in his parish were shaken by falling bombs, as families were shaken by news of loved ones killed or missing or imprisoned, as an immoral government shook the very foundations of established moral values and human rights, the word "shaking" appeared in Delp's preaching and writing, used as a summons to conversion.

Two months after he wrote the meditation that follows on the next pages, Father Delp was hanged, on the Feast of the Presentation, February 2, 1945. May his memory be eternal.

FIGURES OF ADVENT

Written in Tegel Prison, Berlin.

December 5, 1944

ADVENT is a time of being deeply shaken, so that man will wake up to himself... Being shaken awake is entirely appropriate to thoughts and experiences of Advent...the shaking is what sets up the blessedness of the season and enkindles the inner light in our hearts, so Advent will be blessed with the promises of the Lord. Man should not grant himself the commonplace, habitual reflections about Advent. He will see figures...who personify and live the Advent message and blessing...these figures call and touch mankind...primarily, I mean three types: the Voice Calling in the Wilderness, the Angel of the Annunciation, and the Blessed Mother.

The Voice Calling in the Wilderness

Blessed is the era that can honestly claim it is *not* a desert wilderness. Woe to the era in which the voices calling in the wilderness have fallen silent, shouted down by the noise of the day, or prohibited...or restricted and quiet out of fear and cowardice. The devastation will soon take over so horrendously on all sides that the scriptural reference to a *desert wilderness* will spontaneously occur to us all. I think we know this.

Such John the Baptist figures, forged by the lightning of mission and vocation, should never be lacking from life, not for a moment... They call out blessing and salvation. They call man to face his last chance, because they already feel the ground trembling and the timbers creaking; they see the steadfast mountains deeply quaking and even the stars of heaven

dangling insecurely. They call man to the potential of averting the spreading



wilderness, which is about to fall on him and crush him... May the Advent figure of John the Baptist...not be a stranger to our wilderness of ruins. Much in our lives is dependent upon these figures. For how shall we hear if no one calls and the storm of delusion and wild destruction truly overcomes us?



The Angel of Annunciation

I see this year's Advent with an intensity and presentiment like never before. When I pace back and forth in my cell, three steps forward and three steps back, hands in irons, ahead of me an unknown destiny, I understand very differently than before those ancient promises of the coming Lord who will redeem and set us free. And...comes the memory of the angel that a good person gave me for Advent two years ago. It held a banner: "Rejoice, for the Lord is near." A bomb destroyed the angel. A bomb killed the good person, and I often sense that she continues to do angel-services for me. The terror of this time would not be bearable...(without) the knowledge of the quiet angels of annunciation, who speak their message of blessing in the distress...

These are not the loud angels of public jubilation and fulfillment, these angels of Advent. Silently and unnoticed, they come into private rooms and appear before our hearts as they did long ago. Silently they bring the questions of God and proclaim to us the miracles of God, with whom nothing is impossible...

To wait in faith - no longer because we trust the earth or the stars or our temperament and good courage - but only because we have perceived God's messages and know about his announcing angels, and even have encountered one. (*cont.*)

The Blessed Mother

She is the most comforting figure of Advent. That the angel's message found her heart ready, and the Word became flesh, and in the holy room of her motherly heart the earth grew far beyond its limitations into the human-divine sphere - these are the holiest comforts of Advent.

The poets, and creators of myths, and mankind's other legend-and-story-tellers have always spoken of mothers... They wanted to tap into the mysterious, regenerative wellsprings of the universe with this word, and to invoke the secret of life. In all this there was - and is - hunger, and presentiment, and longing, and an Advent waiting for that blessed woman. That God would become a mother's son and that a woman could walk upon this earth, her body consecrated as a holy temple and tabernacle for God, is truly the earth's culmination and fulfillment of its expectation.



The comfort of Advent shines forth in so many various ways from this hidden figure of the blessed and waiting Mary. Oh, that this was granted to the earth, to bring forth such fruit! That the world was permitted to enter into the presence of God through the sheltering warmth, as well as the helpful and reliable patronage of her motherly heart!

* * *

Three examples of Advent as a holy, as well as symbolic figure. This should be no finely drawn idyllic imagery but rather a call addressed to me and to you, dear friend, if these pages find their way to you.

Therefore, let us kneel down and pray for the threefold warning prophets of the Lord and to overcome the devastation of life through conversion of heart. Let us not shun and suppress the earnest words of the calling voices, or those who are our executioners today may be our accusers once again tomorrow, because we have silenced the truth... Once again, let us kneel down and pray for keen eyes capable of seeing God's messengers of annunciation, for vigilant hearts... The golden threads of the genuine reality are already shining everywhere. Let us know this, and let us, ourselves, be comforting angels.

-Alfred Delp, "Advent of the Heart", Ignatius Press.

The Meaning of Christmas



"One night there rang out over the stillness of an evening breeze, over the white chalked hills of Bethlehem - a gentle cry. The great ones of the earth did not hear the cry, for they could not understand how a Child could be greater than a man. There were only two classes of people who heard the cry that night: shepherds and wise men. Shepherds: those who knew they knew nothing. Wise men: those who know they do not know everything. Only the very simple and the very learned discovered God - never the man with one book.

When the shepherds and wise men came to the Crib, they saw a Babe Whose tiny hands were not quite long enough to touch the huge heads of the cattle, and yet were the hands that were steering the sun and moon and stars in their courses. They saw Baby Feet that did not walk, and yet one day would bear the weight of Divine Omnipotence; they saw eyes that might have read the secrets of every living heart that hour; under the Baby Brow they knew was beating a mind and an intelligence that fashioned the universe and with it a human intelligence that would grow in age and grace and wisdom before God and man.

Christmas is not something that *happened* such as the Battle of Waterloo; it is something that is *happening*. What happened to the human nature which Christ took from Mary by her consent, can happen, in a lesser manner, to our human nature by our free consent.

On our part, there must be the free response to the Divine initiative, but this implies dying to the lower existence of sin and selfishness, pride and lust. To become a Christian does not mean reading religious books or singing hymns or being kind to neighbors; it means sharing the Divinity that first came to us at Bethlehem... (*cont. on back cover*)

(cont.)

When this Christ-life gets inside of us, it affects our intellect, by giving us a truth which reason itself cannot know; it affects our will, by giving us an impetus and energy for good which we could not produce of and by ourselves. It is, in the truest sense, a rebirth, except this time we are not born of the flesh, but of the Spirit. As someone has said, "We are all eggs at present, but we just cannot go on being ordinarily 'decent eggs'. Either we have to get hatched to the Divine or else we rot."

Once, however, we assent to the crucifixion of that which is low and base in us, His life can make the feeblest, filthiest of us blaze with a dazzling, radiant light so that we become as stainless mirrors that reflect the life of God. The process is not easy because the purpose of God's coming to man was not to make us *nice* people, but to make us new creatures. If marble suddenly began to bloom, and flowers suddenly began to move from shade to sunshine, and dogs began to quote Shakespeare and Dante, they would be manifesting a power and capacity which was quite beyond their nature; so too, if we who are creatures of God, pieces of His own handiwork, began to be partakers of His Divine nature and in the truest sense of the word His children, this would be something that transcends our nature far more than a marble blooming or a dog quoting poetry...

The power is there to make us different than we are; it is for our freedom to decide if we will respond, and if we are willing to pay the price of having the dross burned off the gold in the flames of love. Let it not be said of anyone, "I am too foul; I am a beast; I am not worthy to be lifted up." It was just to assure such persons as these that He was born in a stable, and on His first night in this world companioned with beasts. "

- *Bl. Fulton J. Sheen*, "The True Meaning of Christmas."

