

OUR LADY OF VICTORY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION CHAPEL

# ADVENT-CHRISTMAS



*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

*-O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## ADORER NEWS

**Friday Evening Adorer Commitments Needed:** Please consider making a Holy Hour during the Friday evening hours, which for months have been in need of adorers. What a beautiful way to end your week, by visiting the Lord Jesus to thank Him and keep Him company in those neglected hours.

**'Tis the Season! Update Your Contact Info:** As we head into the winter months, the OLV Chapel may need to close for inclement weather. If your phone number has changed, please update it on your OLV account so you can receive alerts pertaining to closures.

**Chapel Support:** Due to the rise in utility and insurance costs, we have elected to increase our stipend to St. Mary's Church, which is paid three times a year. We welcome donations to the **OLV Chapel Fund** and are grateful to all our regular donors, and all those of you who give anonymously. Your support enables us to pay for our two websites - *OLV.Weadorehim.com* and *Hudsonadoration.com*; the candles, books, newsletter, cleaning, maintenance, speakers, and events we sponsor. If you have been spiritually enriched by any of this, we invite you to consider making an end-of-year gift, which helps keep the doors open to anyone seeking the Real Presence of Christ. May God bless you for your dedication and generosity!

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*WE wish all of our adorers and visitors to this Adoration Chapel a most blessed and joyful Advent and Christmas. Your continued devotion and support have*



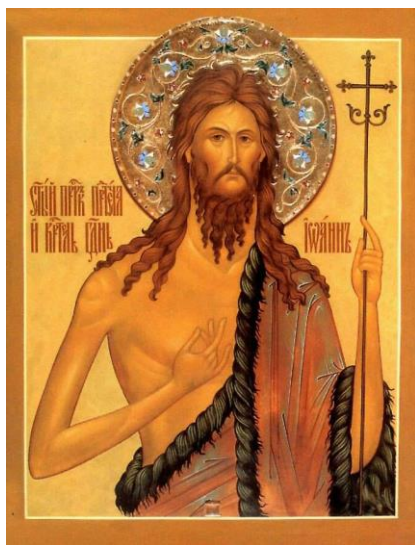
*made it a spiritual refuge and source of inspiration and consolation for untold souls. May the Real Presence of Christ Jesus bring His grace and peace into your hearts, your homes, and your families as you celebrate this holy season!*

*-The OLV Chapel Management  
Committee*

# IN SEARCH OF GOD: A MEDITATION FOR ADVENT

PRESENCE OF GOD – The Lord is coming; I place myself in His presence and go to meet Him with all the energy of my will.

MEDITATION Jesus directs our attention to the strong, austere figure of John the Baptist. “What went you out to see? A reed shaken by the wind? A man clothed in soft garments?” If we want to prepare ourselves for Jesus’ coming, we, like John the Baptist, must detach ourselves from all the goods of the earth. He had left everything and gone into the desert to lead a life of penance. His example invites us to retire into the interior desert of our heart, far from creatures, to await the coming of Jesus in deep recollection, silence, and solitude, insofar as the duties of our state in life permits. To our interior recollection, let us add a greater spirit of penance and mortification. If we discover that we are lax in this regard, it would be well to do something more: some mortification at meals, in our rest, in our clothing, some work that is hard or painful to our nature.



If God is within us, why do we have so much difficulty in finding Him and recognizing His presence? The answer is clear: God is within us but He is *hidden*. *If we wish to find Him, we must go forth from all things, according to the affection and will.* To “go forth”, signifies to detach oneself, deprive oneself, renounce oneself, annihilate oneself, to die spiritually to oneself and to all things. This is the path of...complete detachment: it is the death of the old man, the indispensable condition for life in God. St. Paul has said, “You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col 3,3).

The loving search for God hidden within us goes hand in hand with this dying to the world and to ourselves. The more we die to ourselves, the more we find God.

We live too much in the exterior. Too often there is in us a host of inclinations, ideas, and strong passions that make us turn to creatures and induce us to give them our hearts, build our hopes on them, and find consolation in thinking about them. We live in this superficial world which absorbs us so completely that it makes us forget the more profound life, the really interior life where a soul may live in intimate union with its God. The Lord waits for us, so to speak, in the depth of our soul, but we do not go into these depths, taken up as we are with our affairs, to which we give all our interest.

COLLOQUY During this Advent, O my Jesus, You invite me to greater recollection, to greater interior and exterior silence, so that I may be able to hear Your voice and prepare for Your coming. Help me, then, to quiet my continual chatter about useless things, the discordant voices of nature, self-love, sensitiveness, the distracting prattle of my fantasies, imaginations, thoughts, and useless preoccupations. I acknowledge that often my mind and heart are like a raging sea in which the waves thunder continually; and yet, if You wish, a sign from You will be enough to make calm return and all be silent.

O my God, make me understand that I am Your dwelling-place, the hiding place where You conceal Yourself. Have courage and rejoice, my soul, knowing that the object of your hope is so near to you that He dwells in you and you cannot exist without Him. What more could I desire, and what do I seek outside myself, O my Lord and my God, when You have deigned to put

Your kingdom, Your dwelling-place, in my very soul? Here, then, in the innermost sanctuary of my heart, I wish to love, desire, and adore You; no, I shall no longer go to seek You outside myself.”

-Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.  
Excerpted from *Divine Intimacy*.



# The Nativity Icon

## Explained

To Our Western eyes, accustomed as we are to classical ideals of beauty and form, Byzantine iconography can seem bewildering, primitive, and even severe.

Icons, however, are a true catechesis. They are not a reflection of our perceived reality, but rather as *God* sees things. God is not bound by time or space, and therefore icons collapse both, as He sees all things at once, and is not limited dimensionally as we are. Consequently, we see the earthly with the heavenly, the human with the Divine, the wise with the humble, and the entire creation united in harmony to receive the incarnate Word of God.

The Nativity icon's focal point is the Christ Child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, foreshadowing His death and burial cloths. His manger is depicted as a coffin, a symbolic indication of His sacrifice for the life of the world. The dark cave represents the world's darkness in sin before Christ. It also symbolizes the tomb, where He was buried after His death.

At the center of the icon, the Virgin Mary is depicted kneeling towards the newborn Child. Her larger size and unique position beside the Baby, at the heart of the icon, emphasizes her essential role in the divine plan of salvation. In iconography, this is called *hierarchical perspective*. Her model of obedience, accepting the incarnate Word of God, gave her a dominant place in the mystery of the Incarnation.

In traditional iconography, the Virgin Mary is always depicted wearing a veil with three stars on her forehead, the right, and left shoulders. The three stars signify her inviolate and perpetual virginity before, during, and after giving birth to Christ.

The Gospels do not mention an ox or donkey, yet they appear in all images of the Nativity from as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century. They direct our attention to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah about the birth of Christ:







“The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s manger...” (Is 1:3). According to St. John Chrysostom, the ox symbolizes the Jews and the donkey symbolizes the Gentiles. Before the Cross, neither the Jews recognized Christ nor the Gentiles knew Him, while after His resurrection, the whole world flocked to Him.

On the bottom left side, Joseph sits distant from the cave, perplexed and confused, questioning in his heart how a virgin can give birth and remain a virgin. His distance from Mary and Jesus is meant to emphasize the Scriptural account and teaching of the Church that Jesus was born of a *Virgin*. In front of him we see the devil disguised as a withered old man holding a stick, confronting Joseph and planting seeds of doubt in his heart. Joseph’s confusion reflects humanity’s disbelief and struggle to understand the Incarnation of Christ. Eventually, Joseph overcomes his doubts and serves the mystery of the Incarnation, as he becomes the faithful guardian of the Christ Child.

The inclusion of the midwife and her assistant, bottom right, is meant to show that Christ *condescended* to undergo a human custom, just as He later condescended to be subjected to circumcision and baptism, of which He had no need.

Piercing the entire scene is the starlight over the Infant. In traditional iconography, the star is represented not as a natural, but as a supernatural phenomenon. St. John Chrysostom, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew* wrote: “*This star was not the common sort, or rather was not a star at all...but some invisible power transformed into this appearance...some power highly endued with reason... One may perceive this clearly from its mode of pointing Him out. For it did not, remaining on high, point out the place; it being not possible for the Magi to ascertain it, but it came down and performed this office... How did the star point out a spot so confined, just the space of a manger and shed, unless it left that height and came down, and stood over the very head of the young Child? And at this the Evangelist was hinting when he said, “Lo, the star went before them (the Magi), til it came and stood where the young Child was.”*

Let us pray that this same radiant light illuminates our own souls, and helps us contemplate the profound mystery of the Incarnation!

-Sources: Constantine Cavarnos, *Guide to Byzantine Iconography*. Fr. Ayman Hfouf, *Icon of the Nativity of Christ Explained*. Peter Pearson, *A Brush with God*.

# THE RESPONSIBILITY IS OURS

WE who live, if you wish, in a lifelong Bethlehem, have a grave responsibility. Believing in His presence here in the fullness of His divine and human natures, we have the responsibility of invoking this Jesus, begging Him, pleading with Him that He might grant those graces—if need be, miraculous graces—that the sinful world He came to redeem so desperately needs.

We have reason to be scared. As I speak on Christmas day about that Christmas long ago, yet see so much crime, massive cruelty, the murder of one-

million two-hundred thousand unborn children in America since last Christmas—I ask, “Dear God, have you really become man? Did you really redeem the world? If you did, where, dear Lord, is the grace that you’ve won for a sinful human race? What happened? What is wrong?”

And here is the terror. The awful thought comes to me, “It can’t be because God did not do His part; it can only be that we have not done ours: that we have not loved enough, that we have not suffered enough, that we have not prayed enough to this infinite God in human flesh in our midst.”

He redeemed the world, but it is not redeemed unless we cooperate with His grace. And we must cooperate with His grace not only for ourselves, but for the whole wide world that so needs people who in humble, sincere, and loving faith will beg the dear Jesus to be a “Jesus” indeed—so that His coming into the world will not have been for any souls in vain.



-Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

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