

Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Parish Life! from OSV



News and resources for your parish

December 2007

Parish Life! from Our Sunday Visitor

Welcome to **Parish Life!** from Our Sunday Visitor. As a parish leader who has ordered from Our Sunday Visitor in the past, you're receiving this eighth edition of our special e-newsletter just for parishes!

Be sure to visit our Parish Resources pages. Newly updated for December, this material is written specially for YOU! Find Advent help and hints for early childhood, elementary, adult, youth, catechists, and the workplace! [Help for your parish is here now»](#)

Each month you'll find timely content, practical information, and insightful inspiration delivered right to your inbox. We'd love to hear from you as well, so please e-mail us with questions or topics you would like to see discussed in future editions: yyoung@osv.com.

To continue receiving this monthly e-newsletter, you need do nothing. To unsubscribe, please follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.

Feel free to forward this email to a friend who might be interested.

Allowing the Lord to Come

by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Chances are you've been encouraging parishioners to set aside some time during Advent to prepare spiritually for the birth of Jesus. Maybe you've suggested that they do a little spiritual reading. Or take time for quiet reflection. Or make a conscious effort to slow down the hectic pre-Christmas pace.

Are you following your own advice?

Parishes are busy places. Advent is a busy time. You have lots of extra demands on you in your ministry. And you still have all of your personal pre-Christmas preparations at home.

All of this adds up to the potential for burnout. To avoid burnout, you need to follow the good advice that you've given to your parishioners. That means setting aside time each day for your own spiritual growth.

It could be 15 minutes in the morning. It could be quiet time before bed. Or perhaps you can sneak into church for silent reflection before the Blessed Sacrament during your busy day.

Here are some things to reflect upon during your Advent quiet time:

1. Think back on how the Holy Spirit drew you into ministry.
2. Reflect on all of the special gifts and talents God has given you.
3. Make a list of the good things that have happened in the past year.
4. Thank God for all the people who have supported your ministry.
5. Ask God for whatever special needs you have personally or in your ministry.
6. Let go of any resentments you've been holding onto.
7. Offer up something painful or difficult in your life.
8. Renew your commitment to serve the Lord.

When you take quiet time for yourself, you allow the Lord to come to you in a special way. And isn't that what Advent is all about?

Pope Benedict XVI Writes Second Encyclical

The virtue of hope involves desiring the joy of eternal life with God above everything else and depending on God's grace, rather than our own strength on that journey (see Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1817).

Hope can be a challenge, though. There are so many voices in the world trying to convince us that God isn't real, so why hope in Him? We are encouraged to place our hope in human achievement - including our own - instead. We suffer and lose hope. The reality of death frightens us into hopelessness.

In his second encyclical, *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict XVI teaches us about hope. He answers the questions that people today have about what hope really is and reminds us of the truly Good News at the heart of our Christian hope.

- From Our Sunday Visitor's new pamphlet on "Pope Benedict's Encyclical on Hope" Call 800-348-2440 or visit www.catalog.osv.com to order.

In This Issue

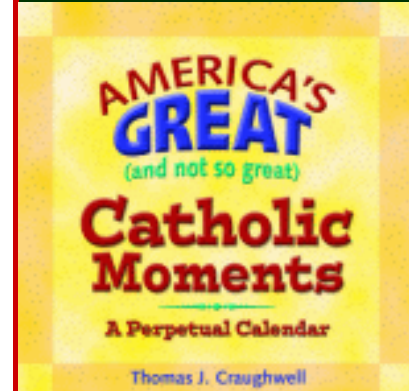
Allowing the Lord to Come
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O Antiphones

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Catholic Moments



Over the years, some good movies have opened on Christmas Day. In 1943, "The Song of Bernadette" appropriately opened on the day of Our Lord's birth. Jennifer Jones starred in this luminous film adaptation of Franz Werfel's novel of the life of St. Bernadette of Lourdes. The movie received 12 Academy Award nominations and won four Oscars, including the Best Actress award for Jones. - From "America's Great (and not so great) Catholic Moments," by Thomas Craughwell (OSV).

[Order it here»](#)

Mother Teresa



Mother Teresa's Devotion to Our Lady

Proving once again at what a powerful presence she possessed, Mother Teresa has been in the news recently.

Though some of the news reports got it wrong, charging her

O Antiphones

The "O Antiphons" are a distinctive feature of the Liturgy of the Hours in the week preceding the Christmas Vigil. They are typically sung at Vespers (Evening Prayer) before and after the recitation of the Magnificat.

Originally incorporated into monastic prayer during the Middle Ages, these antiphons, often called the Great Antiphons or the O Antiphons, are also present in the daily Lectionary as the verse for the Gospel Acclamation during this week. They add a mood of eager expectation to the liturgy that builds throughout the last seven days before Christmas Eve.

Beginning on Dec. 17, they are as follows, including biblical references:

- Dec. 17 - O Wisdom (Sirach 24:2; Wisdom 8:1)
- Dec. 18 - O Lord and Ruler (Exodus 3:2; 20:1)
- Dec. 19 - O Root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-3)
- Dec. 20 - O Key of David (Isaiah 22:22)
- Dec. 21 - O Dawn of the East (Psalm 19:6-7)
- Dec. 22 - O King of the Gentiles (Psalm 2:7-8; Ephesians 2:14-20)
- Dec. 23 - O Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14; 33:22)

- Adapted from "Catholic Parent Know-How: Something New for Advent," Our Sunday Visitor.

[Order here»](#)

Pope Benedict XVI Answers Our Questions

One of Pope Benedict XVI's strengths is a vast knowledge and ability to answer questions of the faith insightfully yet conversant. In February, "Question and Answers - Pope Benedict XVI," will be available from Our Sunday Visitor. Here's a preview:

"Dear Pope, can you explain to us what Jesus meant when he said to the people who were following him: 'I am the bread of Life?'

"First of all, perhaps we should explain clearly what bread is. Today, we have a refined cuisine, rich in very different foods, but in simpler situations bread is the basic source of nourishment; and when Jesus called himself the bread of life, the bread is, shall we say, the initial, an abbreviation that stands for all nourishment. . . .

"And therefore, if Jesus says: 'I am the bread of life,' it means that Jesus himself is the nourishment we need for our soul, for our inner self, because the soul also needs food. . . . We really need God's friendship, which helps us to make the right decisions. We need to mature as human beings. In other words: Jesus nourishes us so that we can truly become mature people and our lives become good."

A Steward Reflects: The Bishop's Pastoral Letter

The holiday season at the end of the year is an annual opportunity to gather with loved ones to contemplate and celebrate the many blessings we've been entrusted with. "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response" is the name of the pastoral letter written by the U.S. Catholic bishop's ad hoc committee on stewardship in 1992. Fifteen years later, the message of this document continues to change the hearts and lives of Catholics and Catholic parishes around the world. Over the next several months, this column will reflect on a different chapter of the letter that introduced millions to the generous, simple and gratifying lifestyle of stewardship.

Have you read "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response"? If so, how long ago was it? Has the pastor and parish staff read the letter? The cost is \$9.95 and the publication number is 5-465. [You can order the 10th anniversary edition online by clicking here»](#)

with not believing in God, she had wonderful ways of keeping her faith during dark and difficult times.

One of those ways was relying on the presence of the Blessed Mother, detailed in a new book "[Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady](#)," published by Our Sunday Visitor. In many pictures of Mother Teresa, you will see her holding a rosary. Why? In addition to helping her recall and relive her founding vision, it was her way of "holding Our Lady's hand." [Read an excerpt here»](#)

Quick Links

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Parish leaders' resources

Q&A with Dr. Joseph White

7 Steps to Becoming Financially Free Small Group Study Program

New VBS program: Great Bible Reef

Register to win free programs and materials for YOUR parish

FREE parish resources

Our Sunday Visitor's website offers monthly articles on early childhood education, elementary education, adult formation, spirituality at work, youth ministry that inspires and help for catechists. [To see the latest, click here»](#)

Teaching Catholic Kids

Now available on TCK: Taking Advent Seriously

Who takes Advent seriously anymore? We have to. We all have to. Advent is a rehearsal, a rehearsal for Jesus' coming. He is coming. Maybe today for all of us. Definitely today for some of us.

Find free downloads and resources to help kid and teachers find Christ this Advent!

[Click here to visit the Teaching Catholic Kids web site»](#)

Advent: Here, now comes Christ

For a four-week plan on how to implement an approach of wait, convert, hope, see Our Sunday Visitor's pamphlet "How to Celebrate Advent."

From the pamphlet: "The First Week: ... Every one of us has some part of our lives that yearns for light, that is in deep need of reconciliation, or that feels lost. A glance at newspaper headlines tells us how great is the need of this broken world. *Come, Lord Jesus!* will probably be an easy prayer for this week."

Call 1-800-348-2440 or visit us on the web at www.osvbooks.com

Let us know what you think!

We hope you've enjoyed our Parish Life! newsletter! Let us know what you think--we appreciate your comments, questions, suggestions, and requests! Email York Young: yyoung@osv.com.

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