The Holy Father’s Prayer Intentions for December 2010

General Intention: That our personal experience of suffering may be an occasion for better understanding the situation of unease and pain which is the lot of many people who are alone, sick or aged, and stir us all to give them generous help.

Missionary Intention: That the peoples of the earth may open their doors to Christ and to His Gospel of peace, brotherhood and justice.

THE ADVENT WREATH
(CatholicCulture.org)

This is the most popular Advent tradition, with a strong emphasis on the coming of the Light of the World. More candles are lit the closer we come to Christmas, and the closer we are to receive Him in our hearts and in Holy Communion.

THEME:

Spiritual preparedness is to be sincere in repenting of our sins.

WORD:

Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Rom 15:4-9; Mt 3:1-12

ORDER:

• Repent
• Welcome one another

BLD SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES - DECEMBER 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>3 Fri</td>
<td>8:00-10:00 pm</td>
<td>Eucharistic Celebration</td>
<td>OLA Church</td>
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<td>4 Sat</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>OLA Parish Christmas Concert</td>
<td>OLA Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Sun</td>
<td>4:00-6:00 pm</td>
<td>Dinner Service - Out of the Cold</td>
<td>St. Matthew’s Anglican Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Wed</td>
<td>7:15-10:15 pm</td>
<td>Mission’s Christmas Party</td>
<td>OLA Basement</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Fri</td>
<td>8:00-10:00 pm</td>
<td>Advent Eucharistic Celebration</td>
<td>OLA Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Sat</td>
<td>1:00-3:00 pm</td>
<td>Westbury Caroling</td>
<td>Westbury</td>
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<td>11 Sat</td>
<td></td>
<td>BLD Advent Celebration (Sponsored by FE #13)</td>
<td>Humberwood Anglican Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Sun</td>
<td>2:00-3:00 pm</td>
<td>Providence Caroling</td>
<td>Providence Health Care</td>
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<td>16 Thurs</td>
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<td>Simbang Gabi (Sponsored by BLD)</td>
<td>OLA Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 Sun</td>
<td>1:30-4:30 pm</td>
<td>OLA Prayer Group Christmas Party</td>
<td>OLA Basement</td>
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*BLD activities will resume with the celebration of Family Mass on Friday, January 7, 2011 @ 8:00 pm

BUKÁS-LOÓB SA DIYÓS • OPEN IN SPIRIT TO GOD
Toronto District

Second Sunday of Advent

REFLECTION:

The first three Sundays of Advent are prophetic preparations to the coming of our Lord Jesus at Christmas time. This Sunday is the second Sunday of Advent in the Catholic Liturgical Calendar. Advent is a period of waiting.

In the First Reading, Isaiah speaks of the day when the Lord is coming in power, “to bring peace to His people and give them eternal life.” Then in this Sunday’s Gospel, we have John the Baptist quoting Isaiah: “It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: listen to the voice of one crying in the wilderness; prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.” (Mt 3:3)

All the readings of this second Sunday of Advent speak of the day when the Lord is coming in power, “to bring peace to His people and give them eternal life.” We believe that true
peace can only come from Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace. From the moment of His birth, He brings us a message of peace and joy. This is the peace that He passed on to His disciples in every age and in every place. When do we experience this kind of peace? When Christ is present in our lives, we experience calmness and peace. Making a good confession is one sure way of receiving God’s peace. When we are humble and sincere with ourselves and with God, when we recognize our nothingness and when we acknowledge our total dependence on God, we experience peace.

When we believe with all our hearts, that God is our Father, an ever-loving and merciful Father, we experience peace -even in times of difficulties, disappointments and failures because we are confident He will never abandon us.

We can also be instruments of peace when we are in the state of grace. The second Reading exhorts us “to live in harmony with one another, so that we may be able to praise God in one voice, giving honour to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” When we console those who are suffering, when we pardon those who have offended us, promptly and as often as necessary, when we understand others, even when others may not even try to understand us, when we care for people even if they ignore us, then we are instruments of God’s peace.

We can lose our peace through sin - through pride, impatience, anger and disobedience. When this happens, let us lose no time to recover our peace of mind through confession. When we encourage and bring our family and friends to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we become instruments of peace.

In the Gospel, St. John the Baptist calls us to repent and prepare the way of the Lord. He said, when we prepare others to meet Christ, we should lead humble, simple ordinary lives. In Mt 3:11, he says he is not even “worthy to carry His sandals.” He shows us the way to follow if we are to prepare others to meet Christ. In our apostolate, we should not seek personal fulfillment nor should we aspire to be the center of attraction. What is important in our lives is Jesus, that Jesus should be announced, known, and loved through our public testimonies.

Advent is the time for us to ask ourselves: “Do we give good example to our family, our friends, our workmates and our brothers and sisters in the community in the way we carry out our work? What kind of witnesses are we? Are we forceful enough to convince those who are still absorbed in possessing material things as if these were their last end - that their hearts will never be satisfied without these things? Can we show the way to them?

Lastly, we should remember that we cannot give what we do not have. Let us increase our efforts then to grow in holiness through prayers, self-denials, confessing our sins through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, frequently attending the Holy Mass and the receiving of the Holy Eucharist. They are the best ways to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

December 8 - Feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception

(Prof. Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira)

Our Lady was conceived without original sin. She had a perfect purity, with no bad inclinations. Therefore, she had a great facility to correspond entirely with the grace of God at every moment. Natural and the supernatural grandeur merged together in her soul in a profound and extraordinary harmony. Above all other creatures, she had the highest notion of the sanctity of God and His correspondent glory. She also had the clear notion of what Creation owes to that glory. She knew, and knows, how all created beings should glorify God.

The feast of her Immaculate Conception is, then, in many senses, the commemoration of her purity, her intransigence, and her combativeness. The Holy Scripture refers to Our Lady as “terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata,” as terrible as an army set in battle array. The Church also says that it is she alone who smashes all heresies. To celebrate this fact, in statues of the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady is crushing the head of the serpent.

What should we ask Our Lady on this feast day? We should ask for a great love of God and a high understanding of His glory, which will, as a natural consequence, give us great intransigence and combativeness.
entrusted to us. Jesus has shown us the path to life, and He is the light of our path. If we follow His ways and walk in His light every day of our lives, we will surely be blessed with that which we hope for, life eternal with Him in glory.

God is not remised in giving us instructions for holy living. But it requires discipline on our part to follow Him. The first week’s theme speaks of this virtue or value - Spiritual preparedness is to conduct ourselves with propriety. Discipline is an essential virtue because without it, it will be easy for us to go astray and be lost in the enticement of the world. As Catholics, we are fortunate because the Holy Eucharist is available to us through daily mass and so also is the sacrament of reconciliation. Sacramental graces are sure winners in giving us the strength and courage to follow in the discipline of the Lord, for not by our own might and understanding are we able to do so, but always by the grace of God.

The second week calls for a sincere repentance - Spiritual preparedness is to be sincere in repenting of our sins. When we are honest with ourselves, acknowledging who we truly are, we gain self-knowledge in the light of Christ, and see our own follies and feel an inner movement of the Holy Spirit, convicting us of our sins. It is then that we can repent sincerely, from the heart. Until our repentance comes to this level, we cannot live holy lives. Our ways will remain crooked and we remain vulnerable to sin. Again, as we adhere to the discipline of our prayer life, the grace of God moves in us and allows us to repent and grow deeper in our faith, as He softens and molds our hearts to become more like Him.

This brings us to the third week - Spiritual preparedness is to joyfully await the coming of the Lord. It is Christmastime. And we Filipino Catholics are champions in celebrating this event. Churches are filled to the brim and overflowing. Our streets, our houses, are all decked up and lit for the occasion with the lights and ornaments of varying colors and designs, truly a sight to behold. But spiritual preparedness speaks of our interior being. We experience joy as we celebrate Christmas when we are in a state of grace, meaning, when we walk in the light of Christ, it is only then we are truly joyful and are a cause for joy to others. Joy comes from within. It emanates from our hearts and reflects the love of God who is alive in us. All the external preparations and materialism of this world cannot disguise our real joy in celebrating the birth of the Savior and our hope in the Second Coming of Christ.

Spiritual preparedness is to obey our call to holiness. The fourth week’s theme calls us to live lives of holiness. The promise itself attests to this for who can ascend the mountain of the Lord? “...one whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean, shall receive a blessing from the Lord” (Psalm 24:4-5). It is in obedience to the Word of God that we find the grace to be holy, for even if the going is rough, even if persecuted and afflicted by the trials of life, we continue to obey His Word, and His grace will sustain us. For it is in our weakness that God’s strength is manifested. As we

Brothers and sisters, let us feel the joy of Advent, the joy of waiting for His coming, by joining the happiness and enthusiasm of a pilgrim upon arriving at the Jerusalem Temple: “I rejoice with those who told me: let us go to the house of the Lord!” (Ps 121:1) Yes, let us join them and rejoice.

**DIRECTIONS:**
- Live in harmony with one another.
- With one voice glorify the Lord.

**GOD’S PROMISE:**
"The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him...and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. (Is 11:2)

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Bukas Loob sa Diyos Covenant Community

**WORD, THEMES & PROMISES**

**FOR DECEMBER 2010**

**READINGS:**
- Nov 28 Is 2:1-5/ Ps 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9/ Rom 13:11-14/ Mt 24:37-44
- Dec 5 Is 11:1-10/ Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17/ Rom 15:4-9/ Mt 3:1-12
- Dec 12 Is 35:1-6, 10/ Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10/ Jas 5:7-10/ Mt 11:2-11
- Dec 19 Is 7:10-14/ Ps 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6/ Rom 1:1-7/ Mt 1:18-24
- Dec 26 Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/ Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5/ Col 3:12-21/ Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

**WORD:**

Walking in the light of the Lord requires spiritual preparedness.

**ORDER:**

“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.” (Rom 13:14)

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PROPHECY:

• Watch out and stay awake; walk in the light and prepare for My coming. Do what is right and pleasing to Me and I will always be with you.

DIRECTION:

• Feel the Lord’s coming this season by prayer, repentance, and fasting. Be Jesus to others by sharing goodness and kindness to them.

THEMES AND PROMISES:

Week #1 (1st Sunday of Advent) [Discipline]
Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to conduct ourselves with propriety.
Promise: “Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain…he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.” (Is 2:3)

Week #2 (2nd Sunday of Advent) [Repentance]
Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to be sincere in repenting of our sins.
Promise: “The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him…and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord.” (Is 11:2)

Week #3 (3rd Sunday of Advent) [Joy]
Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to joyfully await the coming of the Lord.
Promise: “They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor our God.” (Is 35:2b)

Week #4 (4th Sunday of Advent) [Holiness]
Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to obey our call to holiness
Promise: “One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean…shall receive a blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his savior.” (Ps 24: 4 & 5)

Week #5 (Feast of the Holy Family) [Unity]
Theme: Spiritual preparedness is to imitate the ways of the Holy Family
Promise: “Blessed is everyone who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways! For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be and favor.” (Ps 128: 1-2)

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REFLECTION FOR DECEMBER 2010

Advent means ‘coming’, or ‘arrival’. To us Catholics, it is the most joyous and anticipated season in the liturgical year of the Church as we commemorate the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ. The Messiah King has come to rule the earth with peace and justice. His birth heralds the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, therefore we rejoice over the fulfillment of the prophecies of Elijah, and strive to obey John the Baptist’s reminder to “prepare the way of the Lord” for someone who is, “…greater and mightier than myself. I am unfit to untie the sandals of His feet.”

This is the focus of our celebration, the ‘First Advent’, so to speak. But there is more to Advent than merely celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus because Scripture also speaks of a second coming, a Second Advent. This is what we, the faithful, anticipate. It is something that we hope for and look forward to, the time when Jesus comes again in glory. Advent therefore speaks of the past and the future. What we celebrate about Advent is a simple truth that God is revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ, and that through Jesus’ presence on earth, we, God’s creation, may be reconciled to God Himself.

That brings us to our Community Word for the December: Walking in the light of the Lord requires spiritual preparedness. This statement describes our own accountability for our hope that the promise of eternal life with God will come true. We are now in the ‘present times’, the period between the past and the future, journeying on earth with the Spirit of the Lord and participating in the process of being purified and tested, and becoming holy, faithful, and obedient to the will of God that we may have the heart and character of Christ on earth. As we await our redemption, we are called to be vigilant, to be constantly prepared, for we do not know the time or the hour or our death, or that of the Second Advent. We are tasked to be good and faithful stewards, individually and as a community, and therefore we have the responsibility to take care of whatever God has

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