Pray, Learn, Act

THE NINE DAYS OF SIMBANG GABI (Dec 15-23)

DAY 1 - Monday of the 3rd Week of Advent

NIGHT: Monday, Dec. 15, 7:30pm at St. Magdalen de Pazzi, 105 Mine Street, Flemington, NJ

Readings of the Day: Nm 24:2-7, Ps 25 4-9, Mt 21: 23-27

Reflection: Today marks the Third Week of Advent, setting the hopeful tone of Christ’s coming. As we prepare for this celebration, we remember Super Typhoon Haiyan that devastated the Philippines a little over a year ago, and we look forward to Pope Francis’ visit next month. Manila Cardinal Luis Tagle once said, “Have no fear. You may be weeping and suffering now. God will raise you up, vindicate you, He will reverse your suffering into joy.”

Learn: Simbang Gabi is a nine-day novena in the anticipation of Christmas and to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. The tradition was brought by the Spanish evangelizers, Simbang Gabi is a tradition of pre-dawn masses for rural communities to praise God and accompany Mary, so to speak, as she awaits the birth of her Son.

Act: Pray this portion of the prayer preparing for Pope Francis’ visit: God our Father, we are all your children. Make of us a nation of mercy and compassion eager to meet Pope Francis. Make us a nation of holiness and heroism through Christ our Lord. Amen

DAY 2 - Tuesday of the 3rd Week of Advent

DAWN: Tuesday, Dec 16 , 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St., New Brunswick, NJ

NIGHT: Tuesday, Dec. 16, 7:30pm at Our Lady of Victories, Sayreville and Church of the Annunciation, Bloomsbury, NJ.


Reflection: Simbang Gabi -- this final countdown to Christmas -- arrives with the same promise as Advent in general: a new beginning is possible. Transformation is possible. Change is possible. In today’s Gospel, the second son went from no to yes. Where can you still move so your words and actions align to “yes” to Jesus?
Learn: Typhoon Hagupit hit the Philippines the weekend of Dec 6-7, 2014. Although not as bad as Super Typhoon Haiyan 13 months before, northern Samar Island sustained severe damage. “It’s a very poor area, with very light-material houses, that essentially just got blown down,” reports Josh Kyller from Catholic Relief Services.

Act: Catholic Relief Services, the official humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic community, is leading a rapid response in Northern Samar: emergency shelter, hygiene programming, small cash programming. They hope to finish by Christmas. You can help: http://www.crs.org/philippines/typhoon-ruby-hagupit/index.cfm.

DAY 3 – Wednesday of the 3rd Week of Advent
DAWN: Wednesday, Dec 17, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St., New Brunswick, NJ
NIGHT: Wednesday, Dec. 17, 7:30pm at St. Matthew, Edison and St. Matthias, Somerset, NJ

Readings of the day: Gn 49:2-10, Ps 72:1-17, Mt 1:1-17

Reflection: Today’s Gospel states the genealogy of Jesus Christ. How can we as Christians be brothers and sisters in Christ? Solidarity is the virtue that ties us more together. Pope Francis has said, “God’s world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other.”

Learn: A well-known folk belief among Filipinos is that if a devotee completed all nine days of the Simbang Gabi, a request made as part of the novena may be granted.

Act: The Catholic Charities Solidarity Team, representing CRS in the Diocese of Metuchen, formed a task force last year and has developed a sustained response to Haiyan. We are supporting a new village, Mary Mediatrix, come to life in Burauen. Learn more and give: ccsolidarity.org/donate

DAY 4 – Thursday of the 3rd Week of Advent
DAWN: Thursday, Dec. 18, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St., New Brunswick, NJ
NIGHT: Thursday, Dec. 18, 7:30pm at St. Ambrose, Old Bridge and St. James, Basking Ridge, NJ

Readings of the day: Jer 23:5-8, Ps 72:1-2, 12-13, 18-19, Mt 1:18-25

Reflection: Pope Francis will visit the Philippines Jan. 15-19, 2015. Today’s Gospel notes Mary being found with child through the Holy Spirit. The Pope said, “These words sum up Mary’s attitude: listening, decision and action. They are words that point out a way for us too as we face what the Lord asks of us: listening, decision, action.

Learn: In the Philippines, children in small groups go from house to house singing Christmas carols, which they call panggandogling

Act: Meditate for at least 10 minutes- spending time each day in silence, reflection, and prayer will give you the space required to recharge your faith. Listen to what God is asking of you.

DAY 5 – Friday of the 3rd Week of Advent
DAWN: Friday, Dec 19, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St., New Brunswick, NJ
NIGHT: Friday, Dec. 19, 7:30pm at St. Helena, Edison and Church of the Sacred Heart, South Plainfield, NJ

Readings of the day: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25, Ps 71:3-17, Lk 1:5-25

Reflection: The old man Zechariah is featured in today’s Gospel. In Sept. 2014, Pope Francis said about this elderly: “Old age, in particular, is a time of grace,” said Pope Francis, “in which the Lord will renew His call...A people that does not have care for [the elderly], that does not treat them well, has no future: such a people loses its memory and its roots.”

Learn: From CRS: “Fair trade is a trading partnership based on dialogue, transparency, and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the Global South.”

Act: CRS works in partnership with SERRV to provide Catholics in the U.S. an opportunity to put their consumer dollars to work for a better world through Fair Trade consuming. Help the Filipino community during your Christmas shopping: https://www.serrv.org/category/philippines
DAY 6 - Saturday of the 3rd Week of Advent

DAWN: Saturday, Dec 20, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St, New Brunswick, NJ
NIGHT: Saturday, Dec 20, 7:30pm at St. Cecilia, Iselin and St. Bartholomew, East Brunswick, NJ

Readings of the day: Is 7:10-14, Ps 24: 1-6, Lk: 26-38

Reflection: Mary Said yes to God. What do you need to say “yes” to more in your life as it relates to Go? Why is it so hard to say yes to what is right and to what God asks of us?

Learn: For larger communities, the devastation of a typhoon to infrastructure, economy and reserves can set back a generation. Your continued support to CRS and CCST allows us to reach more people, more communities, with vital help now—and to stay with them for as long as it takes to achieve a full recovery. A little goes a long way and we need your help.

Act: To get involved in the diocesan Filipino Apostolate, please contact: Rev. Roberto Coruna, Coordinator (908) 479-4905 or Fr. Gerry Padron, social concerns committee (908)-283-1393. For more on the Catholic Charities Solidarity Team and CRS in the Diocese of Metuchen, please contact Msgr. Joe Kerrigan (jkerrigan@ccsolidarity.org).

DAY 7 - 4th Sunday in Advent

DAWN: Sunday, Dec 21, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St, New Brunswick, NJ
AFTERNOON/EVENING: Sunday, Dec 21, 4:00pm Immaculate Conception, Somerville, NJ and 7:00pm at Our Lady of Fatima, Piscataway and

Readings of the day: 2 Sm 7:1-16, Ps 89: 2-5, 27-29, Rom 16: 25-27, Lk 1: 26-38

Reflection: Do you accept God’s love the way you do a Christmas present?

Learn: Catholic Relief Services carries out the commitment of the Bishops of the United States to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas. CRS is motivated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to cherish, preserve and uphold the sacredness and dignity of all human life, foster charity and justice, and embody Catholic social and moral teaching.

Act: Stuck on last-minute Christmas gifts? Give a Celebration Gift from Catholic Relief Services and honor your family and friends in a way that helps improve the lives of people in need. http://www.crs.org/donate/celebration-gifts/ You pick the occasion and gift amount.

DAY 8 - Monday of the 4th Week of Advent

DAWN: Monday, Dec 22, 5:30am at St. Ladislaus (Holy Family Parish), Somerset and Plum St, New Brunswick, NJ
NIGHT: Monday, Dec 22, 7:30pm at Corpus Christi, South River and Sacred Heart Church (Holy Family Parish), New Brunswick, NJ

Readings of the day: 1 Sm: 24-28, 1 Sm 2: 1-8, Lk 1: 46-56

Reflection: Where do you experience conflicts between our Advent goal of slowing down or quieting ourselves to hear God and the fast pace of the holiday consumer season? How do you prepare for things in life in general?

Learn: In preparation for Pope Francis’ visit, Cardinal Tagle said: “The Pope’s visit draws all Christians to personal and social responsibility. As disciples of Jesus Christ driven by the Holy Spirit, we will be challenged to reach out with love to the neglected and abandoned, to help heal the wounds inflicted on children, women and families, to respect who differ from us, to form the youth in responsible freedom, to value life and creation, and to imbue our culture and society with mercy and compassion.”

Act: Pray for the Philippines. The power of prayer has more strength than we think. God listens and hears our prayers, and it is our job to figure out the message he is giving to us.

DAY 9 - Tuesday of the 4th Week of Advent

NIGHT: Tuesday, Dec 23, 7pm at St. Francis of Assisi, Metuchen, NJ with Bishop Paul G. Bootkoski.

Readings of the day: Mal 3: 1-4, 23-24, Ps 25: 4-14, Lk 1:57-66

Reflection: What does Christmas mean to you? How can you keep Christ in Christmas?

“From my point of view, God is the light that illuminates the darkness, even if it does not dissolve it, and a spark of divine light is within each of us.”

-Pope Francis
CCST Metuchen members Chinky Reyes, Ernie Revoir and Fathers Joe Kerrigan and Gerry Paderon meet with CRS country representative Joe Curry (third from left) in Manila, Sept. 2014.

Contact Us

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