

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

2nd Sunday of Advent, C  
December 5, 2021

Fort Yuma, California | P. O. Box 1176, Winterhaven, CA 92283

**Entrance Hymn:** — 311  
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
(verses 1-3)

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**Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor**

**Recessional Hymn:** — 311  
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
(verses 4-6)

**SATURDAYS:**

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Holy Hour  
3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Confessions  
4:30 pm – HOLY MASS

**SUNDAYS:**

7:15 am to 8:15 am – Holy Hour  
7:15 am to 8:15 am – Confessions  
8:30 am – HOLY MASS

## This is Advent. It is Not Christmas.

Advent is a time to renew and deepen our relationship with God, a time of prayerful and trustful waiting for God. We are encouraged to spend more time in prayer. We are to put God first as we look forward to celebrating Christ's coming at Christmas. Because the season of Advent is so important, the Church gives us four weeks to celebrate it, especially with our hearts.

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Our Christmas traditions find their roots in Victorian England. Then, however, the celebration of Christmas was not begun until Christmas Eve. Only on Christmas Eve would Christmas decorations be put out. Only on Christmas Day would presents be opened.

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However, especially as retailers begin putting out the Christmas decorations as early as Halloween, if not earlier, Advent has been swept away by the consumerism of the materialistic world.

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Despite the ever-increasing Christmas celebrations, there is an ever-dwindling understanding of what Christmas means. What was once a religious feast is now a civil holiday. We seem to have replaced Jesus with Santa Claus in order to accommodate and not offend.

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If Advent is only a time dominated by consumerism and buying people gifts that they don't really want or need, it is flying in the face of what Jesus is all about. There is only one gift at Christmas; that gift is Jesus. He is the grace the Father wants to give you this Advent. Whatever gifts we do give should be symbols of God's gift of Christ to us.

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To be able to discern that the gifts we do give are symbols of God's gift of Christ to us, we need repentance-conversion-*metanoia*, which Advent facilitates.

## Universal Prayers

### CELEBRANT:

My friends, let us heed the Baptist's cry and make ourselves ready for the presence of God. Let our response be, *Be born in us, be born in our world.*

### LECTOR:

That nations will find the way to peace, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world.*

That the homeless may find shelter; the hungry may be fed; those in harm's ways be protected, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world..*

That those without jobs find work; that those who are despairing find hope; that those who are lonely find love, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world..*

That the elderly are respected; that youth are confident about the future; that all children are nurtured and loved, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world.*

That the sick are made whole, the suffering are comforted, the dying are filled with longing for heaven, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world.*

We remember those who have died... (pause)... That those who mourn are comforted, we pray... *Be born in us, be born in our world.*

### CELEBRANT:

Loving God, you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. Fill us with your grace and make us heralds of God's presence in our world. We pray always in Jesus name. Amen.

## The Mystery of Faith:

**When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,  
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,  
until you come again.**

# THE READINGS. . . . SOME REFLECTIONS. . . . AND GUIDEPOSTS.

## Introduction to the Liturgy of the Day

Quite likely you have a long checklist of things that you need to do before Christmas, which is now only three weeks away. But is “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” on that list? It ought to be, for this is exactly what John the Baptist called for in preparation for the Lord’s coming.

Gathered here today to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us repent of the wrongs we have done or failed to do and seek forgiveness for our sins so as to properly prepare a place for our Lord to be born into our lives.

### 1st Reading – Baruch 5:1-9

<sup>1</sup>Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever: <sup>2</sup>wrapped in the cloak of justice from God, bear on your head the mitre that displays the glory of the eternal name. <sup>3</sup>For God will show all the earth your splendor: <sup>4</sup>you will be named by God forever the peace of justice, the glory of God’s worship.

<sup>5</sup>Up, Jerusalem! stand upon the heights; look to the east and see your children gathered from the east and the west at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that they are remembered by God. <sup>6</sup>Led away on foot by their enemies they left you: but God will bring them back to you borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones. <sup>7</sup>For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground, that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup>The forests and every fragrant kind of tree have overshadowed Israel at God’s command; <sup>9</sup>for God is leading Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and justice for company.

*The Word of the Lord. All: Thanks be to God.*

### Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6)

**“The Lord has done great things for us;  
we are filled with joy.”**

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD brought back the captives of Zion, we were like men dreaming. <sup>2ab</sup>Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with rejoicing.

**R.**

<sup>2bc</sup>Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” <sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad indeed.

**R.**

<sup>4</sup>Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the torrents in the southern desert. <sup>5</sup>Those who sow in tears shall reap rejoicing. **R.**

<sup>6</sup>Although they go forth weeping, carrying the seed to be sown, they shall come back rejoicing, carrying their sheaves. **R.**

### 2nd Reading – Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

Brothers and sisters: <sup>4</sup>I pray always with joy in my every prayer for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your partnership for the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer: that your love may increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, <sup>10</sup>to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

*The Word of the Lord. All: Thanks be to God.*

### Alleluia – (Luke 3:4, 6)

**Lector:** Alleluia, alleluia. **All:** Alleluia, alleluia.

**Lector:** Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**All:** Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel — Luke 3:1-6

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.

<sup>3</sup>John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:*

*“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

*“Every valley shall be filled*

*and every mountain and hill shall be made low.*

*The winding roads shall be made straight,*

*and the rough ways made smooth,*

*“and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

The backdrop of today's first reading, the psalm response, and the gospel is the Babylonian exile. In 587 BC the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, the Temple, and enslaved thousands of Jews and took them as exiles to Babylon, 700 miles away (which is Iraq today).

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Through Baruch (our first reading) God promises to his people in captivity that he would bring them back from exile. Their return is expressed in poetic language such as "being borne aloft in glory as on royal thrones." To make such a return possible is also expressed in poetic language, "God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and that the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground."

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The psalm response is a song of rejoicing after the exile has ended – some 50 years later.

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500 years after the exile we are in the era of Jesus and John the Baptist. Although the Jews were back from exile, still they were not a free people. The Romans had conquered the whole Babylonian empire and oppression of the Jews continued. John the Baptist (today's gospel) calls everyone to prepare for Jesus' coming; John says, as Baruch did say during his time, that to do it "every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low..."

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How are valleys filled in, mountains made low, paths made straight, and rough ways smoothed?

The answer: Repentance, as John proclaims. It is sin that throws up obstacles on our paths to salvation. Like a falling out between friends prevents that friendship from growing, our past sins prevent our love of God and love of neighbor from developing. Repentance allows us to put aside the past and focus on the future.

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Such is the content of Advent. It is a time to fill the valleys in our spiritual lives and smoothen the rough ways in our hearts; thus, preparing ourselves spiritually for the coming of Our Lord---not only at Christmas, but also for the second and final coming at the end of time.

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The Advent season invites us to a self-examination leading to self-reform. God's kingdom is a rule over men's hearts, and to belong to it means a change of heart manifested in a change for the better.

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Christ had always emphasized inner transformation. "For it is from the deep recesses of the heart where evil comes" (Mk 7:21). It's in the heart where the seed of greed, hatred, adultery, and injustice take root.

### Collections:

Nov. 13-14 — \$ 692.00; Nov. 20-21— \$ 1,298.00  
Nov. 27-28 — \$ 736.00; Via Online, Nov. 14-30 — \$ 875.00  
Collection for National Needs — \$ 612.00

### "The Happy Hypocrite"

The "Happy Hypocrite" is the name of a story written by the late Max Beerbohm, one of the most respected writers of the past century. It is the story of a man named "Lord George Hall," a man with no scruples — a terrible villain who not only is mean but also looks mean. Just looking at his face is enough to put one in mortal fear.

Lord George Hall falls in love with a beautiful and innocent maiden named "Little Miss Mere." She refuses his offer of marriage, saying, "I can never be the wife of a man whose face is not saintly."

As a result, Lord George Hall engages the services of the finest mask-maker in the land who fashions for him the mask of a saint—perfect in every detail.

Wearing the saint's mask, Lord George Hall again asks the hand of the beautiful and innocent Little Miss Mere. This time she accepts his offer of marriage. Minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day, Lord George Hall does everything he can to keep up the hypocrisy. In short, he tries to act like a saint.

He is careful always to portray himself as a kindly, unselfish, patient, and attentive husband. He is especially careful not to reveal any of his evil tendencies.

He is successful in maintaining this saintly image until the day when he encounters an old enemy who sees through the façade and tears off the mask in front of Lord George Hall's lovely wife.

But when the mask has been torn away, a saint's face is revealed. Lord George Hall had actually become the person he was trying to be, minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day. Practice had made perfect.

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Practice to become perfect! Practice becoming the beautiful, loving, caring person God made you to be minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day.

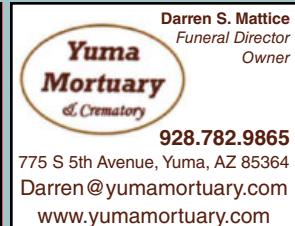
Practice living in defiance of everything in this world that distorts the picture of God's loving mercy we see in Jesus, and you can be sure the "morally crooked ways" in you will be straightened and the "rough edges" of your personality will be made smooth.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Next **Wednesday, December 8th**, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, the patronal Feast Day of the USA and a Holy Day of Obligation. **Our Mass on that day will be at 6:00 PM.**
2. **The Retirement Fund for Religious Collection** has been designated for next weekend. **Special Envelopes for this collection will be distributed after today's Mass.**  
**Give in gratitude.** A donor to the Retirement Fund for Religious writes, "I still remember the lessons the sisters gave us and how they instilled in us the love of our faith." Show your thanks for the service of elderly Catholic sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. Your gift to next week's second collection helps provide care, medicine, and more. Please be generous.

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# We've Missed You!

Welcome Back to Mass

A photograph showing the back of two women with long hair sitting in wooden pews inside a church. The church interior is visible in the background.

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