



**MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY**

**Sunday, December 10, 2023**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

Gathering: Come, Come, Emmanuel

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 85)

**Show us your kindness, Of God. Show us your kindness, O God.**

Preparation A Voice Cries Out BB 46

Mass Parts Mass For Christ The Savior

Communion Maranatha BB 67

Recessional: Ready The Way BB 63

**✠ PARISH TITHING ✠**

Our Parish needs to take in **\$9700.00** each week in order to make ends meet. This amount represents an adjusted budget offertory of \$8500.00 per week plus the combination of budgeted Property and Fuel second collections (\$4800.00 per month divided into 4 weeks or \$1200.00 weekly). Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the Parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. Consider signing up for electronic giving (see below). Especially in these trying times, your Parish depends on your responsible stewardship and support!

**December 3, 2023**

<b>Offertory</b>	<b>\$7,066.77</b>
<b>Property Management</b>	<b>\$1,657.95</b>



Out of respect for the Lord and in consideration of fellow parishioners, please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones during Mass. Thank you!



**PLEASE HELP US!**

As you leave church, kindly take your Bulletin with you - or return it to the basket at the entrance of the Church, return your music book and Mass card to their proper place, and pick up after yourself as you leave. Thanks for being attentive and respectful! F. Albert.



St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to [www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/](http://www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/) or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plastow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish uses **Parish Giving** to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

**UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

December 10	Retired Religious Fund
December 17	Fuel
December 24	No Second Collection

**Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income**

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/ <b>\$100</b>	\$3,000/ <b>\$60</b>
\$75,000	\$3,750/ <b>\$75</b>	\$2,250/ <b>\$45</b>
\$60,000	\$3,000/ <b>\$60</b>	\$1,800/ <b>\$36</b>
\$50,000	\$2,500/ <b>\$50</b>	\$1,500/ <b>\$30</b>
\$40,000	\$2,000/ <b>\$40</b>	\$1,200/ <b>\$24</b>
\$30,000	\$1,500/ <b>\$30</b>	\$900/ <b>\$18</b>
\$25,000	\$1,250/ <b>\$25</b>	\$750/ <b>\$15</b>
\$15,000	\$750/ <b>\$15</b>	\$450/ <b>\$9</b>

**Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase**

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

**CLOTHING DRIVE**

**Kimberly's 18th Annual Holiday Give Away!!!**

I'm back!!! Despite having a toddler now and baby #2 on the way, I'm preparing for another collection!!! We will be collecting clothing and nonperishable food items on **January 6 and 7** at Holy Angels Church in Plaistow (in the Parish Hall), from **12:00 to 4:00 PM** each day. We are accepting CLEAN clothing of any size, any season, any decade. Any donations of socks or underwear must be new and packaged. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to volunteer, please contact me at: [kimberly-andrade@comcast.net](mailto:kimberly-andrade@comcast.net). Thank you so much for your continued support throughout the years. I couldn't do it without you!

God bless,  
Kimberly Clenord



**ADVENT EVENING PRAYER**

Join us on Sunday evenings of the Advent season for sung Evening Prayer at 6:00 PM at Mary, Mother of the Church in Newton. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available following Evening Prayer.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE CATHOLIC APPEAL**

Thank you on behalf of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish for making a donation to the New Hampshire Catholic Appeal. If you have not made a donation to the Appeal, you can do so by filling out a donation envelope found in the pews or at the church entrance. You can make an online gift by visiting [www.catholicnh.org/about/get-involved/giving/nhca/](http://www.catholicnh.org/about/get-involved/giving/nhca/). You can also use your smartphone with the QR code below.

Our Parish target is \$46,740.00. **As of November 13, 2023, we have raised \$45,298.00.** Thank you again for your support of our NH Catholic community and these important diocesan ministries.



**EARLY BULLETIN DEADLINES**

With the holiday season approaching, we have several early bulletin deadlines:

Deadline for the December 24 bulletin is **Monday, December 11 at 12:00 Noon**

Deadline for the December 31 bulletin is **Monday, December 18 at 12:00 Noon.**

Deadline for the January 7 bulletin is **Monday, December 18 at 12:00 Noon.**

**MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH**

**Did you know that all Catholics are required to be married in the Church as a condition of the validity of their marriage?**

Any Catholic married in a civil ceremony (JP) or in any religious ceremony other than a Catholic one (unless specifically excepted by the Bishop) is not living out the Sacrament of Marriage in its fullness according to the teaching of the Church. Contact Father Albert in the Parish Office for more information and assistance – there are ways in which your situation may be resolved!

**GIVING TREES**

Giving Trees are located in the back of both churches  
Please take an ornament, buy the item(s) listed, and return it - **with the ornament attached** - to the church or the parish office **no later than December 9-10** (the Second Sunday of Advent).



**WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...**

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

**Sunday, December 10**

10:00 AM Religious Ed – K to 6 **Plaistow**  
 6:00 PM Vespers **Newton**  
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation **Newton**

**Tuesday, December 12**

6:00 PM Grief Share Group **Plaistow**  
 6:30 PM The Gospel of Mark **Plaistow**

**Wednesday, December 13**  
**Holy Angels Church Open**  
**All Day For Prayer**

**Thursday, December 14**

8:30 AM – 8:30 PM Eucharistic Adoration **Newton**

**Saturday, December 16**

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation **Plaistow**

**Sunday, December 17**

10:00 AM Religious Ed – K to 6 **Plaistow**  
 6:00 PM Vespers **Newton**  
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation **Newton**

**PRAYER LINE**

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).



The Sanctuary Candle in Holy Angels Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Moses and Ellen Tucker** by William Tucker

**VIGIL LIGHT**

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother icon at Mary Mother of the Church will burn this week in honor of the **Tucker Family** by William Tucker



The Sanctuary Candle in Mary, Mother of the Church will burn this week in loving memory of **Carol Tucker** by William Tucker

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

**Saturday, December 9 ~ Second Sunday of Advent**

*Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8 (Vigil)*

4:00 PM Deceased Members of the Fogel Family and Frank Kelcourse by Elaine Kelcourse  
**Plaistow**

**Sunday, December 10 ~ Second Sunday of Advent**

*Is 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Pt 3:8-14; Mk 1:1-8*

8:00 AM Deceased Members of the Ballard and Justin Families by Charlie and Lisa Angwin  
**Newton**

10:00 AM Jesselyn and Donald Driscoll by their family  
**Plaistow**

**Monday, December 11 ~ Damasus I, Pope**

*Is 35:1-10; Lk 5:17-26*

8:00 AM All Souls Intentions  
**Newton**

**Tuesday, December 12 ~ Our Lady of Guadalupe**

*Zec 2:14-17; Lk 1:26-38*

8:00 AM Bill Knowles by his wife, Marjorie Knowles  
**Plaistow**

**Wednesday, December 13 ~ Lucy, Virgin and Martyr**

*Is 40:25-31; Mt 11:28-30*

6:30 PM Brian Gabriel by his wife  
**Plaistow**

**Thursday, December 14 ~ John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church**

*Is 41:13-20; Mt 11:11-15*

8:00 AM Barbara Metcalf by Grace Bukowski  
**Newton**

**Friday, December 15 ~ Advent Weekday**

*Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19*

**No Mass**

**Saturday, December 16 ~ Advent Weekday**

*Sir 48:1-4, 9-11; Mt 17:9a, 10-13 (Day)*

*Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 (Vigil)*

4:00 PM Rick Field by Jackie Tremblay  
**Plaistow**

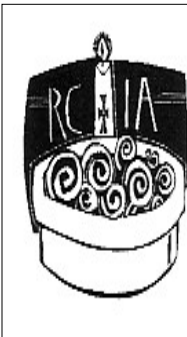
**Sunday, December 17 ~ Third Sunday of Advent**

*Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; 1 Thes 5:16-24; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28*

8:00 AM Suzanne Busch by the St. Vincent de Paul Society  
**Newton**

10:00 AM Donald Nadeau by Bob and Sandy Nadeau  
**Plaistow**





**WELCOME IN CHRIST!**

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish invites all to a deeper love of Jesus and to a fullness of communion with the Church. The **RCIA** is a process where adults and older children are welcomed into the Catholic Church. Some have never been Baptized, others never received Eucharist or

Confirmation, and others arrive at our door after a long faith journey.

Do you know someone who is thinking about becoming part of our Catholic community? Are you the non-Catholic spouse of a parishioner who is wondering about full communion with the Church? Are you an adult Catholic who for whatever reason, "missed" one or more of the sacraments of initiation while growing up? Do you have children over 7 years of age who were never Baptized, or older children who "missed" sacraments?

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (and its adapted form for children) welcomes all kinds of people into the Catholic family. The RCIA is for any adult who is: unbaptized and recognizes a need for spirituality in their life, or Baptized and raised in another Christian tradition but interested in learning about the Catholic faith, or Baptized in the Catholic faith, but never received any formal religious training.

Children of all ages are welcome and participate in age appropriate meetings for their RCIA experience.

Contact Father Albert or Cathy Smith in the Parish Office at 603.382.8324 for more information.

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**

The Compassionate Friends provide support for bereaved families after the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling—any age, any cause. Visit our website at [www.tcfnewburyport.org](http://www.tcfnewburyport.org).

**VITA NOVA – MEN’S RETREAT**

Join other Catholic men for fellowship and spiritual growth as they explore *Surrendering To Divine Providence* on **January 5-7, 2024**. For more information, go to [www.vitanova.org/catholic-mens-retreat](http://www.vitanova.org/catholic-mens-retreat).

**MEN OF ST. JOSEPH**

**ALL MEN OF ST. JOSEPH MEETINGS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

**ADORERS NEEDED AT ADORATION**

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual but is a great source of grace for us as a parish family. We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord. Adoration takes place each Thursday in Newton from 8:30 AM to 8:30 PM. We also need people at all times so we can have 2 people at each hour. If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305, or email her a [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net).

**The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.**

**HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED**

**Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow will be closed from December 2023 until Spring 2024.** This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

**✦ PARISH DIRECTORY ✦**

Parish Office 603-382-8324  
Parish Prayer Line 603-382-8324 x 314  
St. Vincent de Paul Society 603-382-8324 x 315  
St. Luke’s Food Pantry 603-819-4949  
Preschool 603-382-9783  
Presentation of Mary Convent 603-382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay [fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net)  
Cathy Smith [csmith@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:csmith@stluketheevangelist.net)  
Joyce Szczapa [jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net)  
Jackie Tremblay [jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net)  
Val Barczak [mvmbarczak@comcast.net](mailto:mvmbarczak@comcast.net)  
Parish Council [parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net](mailto:parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net)



**MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE**

**Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus  
St. Jude Council #6617**

The Knights of Columbus and Saint Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry would like to thank our parishioners for the ongoing support to feed those in need. Over the last two months, support has been provided to 135 families. That represents 118 children under the age of 18 and 111 adults over the age of 60, for a total of 370 individuals served. Shopping lists and bags are provided on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of every month with the general collection of non-perishable items happening the following (4<sup>th</sup>) weekend. Food donations can also be left in the plastic totes at the rear of either church or brought to the Parish Office any time they are open. Prefer not to shop? Gift cards or checks can be made out to Saint Luke Food Pantry anytime. Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated!

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS  
HAPPENINGS**

The St. Jude Council of the Knights of Columbus allocated \$750 to assist the Giving Tree this year. Five Knights and their families will be pulling tags and purchasing gifts to fulfill the donation made by the Council. The Knights have also purchased several Thanksgiving food baskets for our Food Pantry for Thanksgiving and will be doing the same for Christmas.

**THE KNIGHTS OF  
COLUMBUS  
ST. JUDE COUNCIL  
#6617**



**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

A Men's AA Step Meeting is held on Sunday mornings from 7:00 to 8:00 AM at the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish Hall (Holy Angels.) Masks are required. Bring your own coffee. For more information, call Joe at 617-921-9899.

**CURSILLO**

If you have a desire to know Jesus more closely, a Cursillo is for you. The Cursillo weekend is a short course in Christianity. The purpose of the weekend is to facilitate a meaningful personal encounter with Christ and his body, the Church. Cursillo weekends are being offered at the Sarto Center in Hookset, NH. To find out more, contact Mark Collopy at 603-833-7341 or explore [www.nhcursillo.org](http://www.nhcursillo.org).



**GIVE BACK REUSABLE BAG PROGRAM**

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Luke the Evangelist Parish, has been chosen by **Shaw's**, 4 Plaistow Road, Plaistow, NH to participate in the *Give Back Where It Counts Reusable Bag Program*. For the entire month of December, for every \$3.00 bag purchased at **Shaw's in Plaistow**, they will donate \$1.00 to St. Vincent de Paul. The bags will be displayed near the self-checkout or ask a customer service representative for help.

**St. Vincent  
de Paul  
Society**



**Your "Dropped Dollar" Hard At Work**

Thank you for your continued support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society! Please know that your "dropped dollars" are being used wisely to help the poor in our area. Your generosity does not go unnoticed.

Drop-a-Dollar in the St. Vincent de Paul box on your way out of church. Remember ~ 100% of your donation is used to help those who need a hand up, not a handout.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, O LORD, and answer me  
for I am poor and needy.**



2ND SUNDAY OF *Advent*

### *What are you looking for?*

Once again, prompted by our readings, we turn our attention to the Christ of glory who will come at the end of time. Advent is more than a preparation for Christmas day, the season itself is a time for us to reflect and judge how well we prepare for the Lord's coming by how well we live Jesus' gospel teachings.

It's difficult, however, to orient our Advent preparation and our daily life to a Christ who is yet to come. It's far easier – and certainly the message of the culture and society in which we live that we spend time on the material, the immediate, the right-here-and-now. It's far easier to pay attention to the message that you only prepare for Christmas that celebrates the Jesus who is a sweet, innocent Babe in Bethlehem.

But the readings we hear today challenge us to take the real events of our lives – suffering, pain, anxieties, and unanswered questions (and unresolved elections!) – as well as the joy, peace, contentment and satisfaction we enjoy in life – and see all of those moments as a means to recognize the presence of the Risen Christ in and around us. The readings take us to a place and a moment where the spiritual and the not-always-so-easy-to-see God lives and moves in our lives.

In this way we make Advent something more than the four weeks preceding Christmas. This is what Advent's truly all about – believing in the reality of the incarnation in the past, looking for the reality of Christ in the present, and trusting in the reality of Christ's coming sometime in the future.

A Babe? A Living and Active Spirit? A Great King? What are you looking for in Advent?





A gift to the New Hampshire Catholic Appeal: Future of Our Faith II will enable the Catholic Church in New Hampshire to meet the increasing needs of parishes, Catholic schools, retired clergy, seminarians and much more. Each dollar is carefully stewarded to provide the maximum cost effectiveness for our ministries.

*Your gift supports these essential ministries that keep our faith thriving in New Hampshire.*

- Increasing and supporting vocations (seminarian education, formation, and support of the permanent diaconate)
- Making Catholic education affordable, accessible, and available to all who desire it
- Catholic Charities New Hampshire
- Caring for our retired clergy
- Vibrant parishes
- Evangelization and catechesis at home with *Parable* magazine
- Missionaries abroad and multicultural ministry in New Hampshire

**WAYS TO GIVE**

**Make Your Gift Online**  
[www.catholicnh.org/NHCA](http://www.catholicnh.org/NHCA)

Make a one-time gift, pledge, or give a monthly recurring gift using a credit or debit card.



**Pay by Cash or Check**

Make your check payable to the **New Hampshire Catholic Appeal** and mail to:  
New Hampshire Catholic Appeal  
P.O. Box 5456 Manchester, NH 03108

Check pledges will receive monthly reminders. All pledges will be a maximum of 10 months and should be paid in full by March 31, 2024.

➔ **Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish goal is \$46,740.00**

➔ **Gifts to Catholic Charities NH separately do not count toward the Catholic Appeal Parish Goal.**

**Securities/Stocks, IRAs, Donor Advised Funds and Bequests**

We are grateful for your consideration of these types of important gifts. Please call the Development Office for more information on how to plan your gift at 603-663-0136. Please consult your legal representative or tax advisor first to maximize your benefit.





# Maybe ....

## it's time

### To re-connect with your Church

### To re-new yourself and others through the unique power of the Holy Spirit who guides us in Love and Truth.

If you are a baptized Catholic, have received your First Communion, but decided against Confirmation as a teen, maybe **NOW IS THE TIME** for you to re-consider **Confirmation**.

- ✓ Maybe you weren't ready when you were sixteen years old.
- ✓ Maybe you didn't want to be pressured into it by your family and peers.
- ✓ Maybe you weren't sure that Catholic is who you wanted to be.
- ✓ Maybe you were just beginning to doubt that what you were taught as a child -- about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, the Eucharist, the saints, eternal life -- was all too good to be true.
- ✓ Maybe you were overwhelmed with school commitments, personal disappointments, and feeling that God really didn't care if you were Catholic anyway.

Sessions begin  
soon!

God *does* care about you. *For some reason*, God chose you to be born into a family that would bring you to the Catholic Church for Baptism.

So maybe -- just maybe -- now...it's time....to make your own choice.

# Confirmation.

If you are 18 or over and were never Confirmed, contact the Parish Office. With little time and reflection, practicing Catholics can be prepared to celebrate the gift of the Spirit in their lives.

**Maybe it's your time.**

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, Newton-Plaistow  
603 382 8324. [www.stlukenh.org](http://www.stlukenh.org)



# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Advent (B)  
December 10, 2023

## Prepare the Way of the Lord

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The admonition in the title of this reflection is found in the reading from Isaiah and in the Gospel passage. Isaiah describes a long line of exiles returning to Jerusalem after many hard years in Babylon. God leads them back home. In preparation for God’s and the people’s entry, the way is made clear: “Every valley shall be lifted up...The rugged land shall be a plain” (Isaiah 40:4). The road is repaired, just as we might do if someone important were coming to town. The Gospel writer reinterprets this passage. Instead of repairing an actual roadway, the words of John the Baptist prepare for the entrance of Jesus into his public

ministry. Despite their differences, both passages speak of the “way of the Lord,” which is the way of salvation.

The people are told they will get a new start. In the first reading it will be after exile; in the Gospel it is the new ministry of Jesus. Even St. Peter refers to this newness. He calls it “new heavens and a new earth” (2 Peter 3:13). He goes on to explain what this means. It will be existence “in which righteousness dwells.” Saint Peter further states that this will come to pass on “the day of the Lord,” the day when God’s promises will be fulfilled and “all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9–10).

The events described in all three readings unfold because of God’s merciful love of all. It is for such a day that we are called to prepare. Are we willing to exert the effort? Are we willing to listen to God’s words? †

### Sunday Readings

**Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11**

Go up onto a high mountain, / Zion, herald of good news!

**2 Peter 3:8–14**

The Lord...is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

**Mark 1:1–8**

“Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way.”

*There will be  
a new beginning:  
new heavens and  
a new earth.*



### A Word from Pope Francis

Today there is need for people to be witnesses to the mercy and tenderness of God, who spurs the resigned, enlivens the disheartened, ignites the fire of hope....So many situations require our comforting witness. To be joyful, comforting people....We are all called to comfort our brothers and sister.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 7, 2014



REFLECTION  
QUESTIONS  
**QUESTIONS**  
REFLECTION

- Is there a change you need to make?
- Have you asked God for help?

# Christmas During WW II

*Editor's note: This article appeared in Liguorian in December 1944, when Americans were struggling with issues many face today.*

Shopping for Christmas will not be much fun this year. To inject something new into the spirit of Christmas despite the shortage of gifts at hand, we have a few suggestions. First of all, make this Christmas more than ever the season of peace by remembering some of the persons whom, ordinarily, you would not remember at all. For instance, that relative you dislike and who has never remembered you. Those neighboring children who get on your nerves. Your boss, whom everybody in the office calls "an old bear." The man with whom you had a political argument which left you both glaring at one another. Perhaps you could send a card to say in effect, "I'm not holding any grudges. Let's be friends."

Don't forget the value of good books



as Christmas presents. People have been sobered into much reading by war; they have unusual opportunities for it because of the difficulties of travel and other kinds of amusement. Watch the Catholic magazine book lists for suggestions in this line. Help to scatter far and wide the

good books that not only provide pleasure and amusement but help people live wisely and fully.

Lastly, with whatever gift you send to a friend, include a note promising that you will be remembering him or her especially at Christmas Mass. Maybe, that way, somebody who has forgotten will suddenly be brought back to the realization that Christmas is nothing without its spiritual significance and spiritual realities; maybe, even, somebody will be led back to God through your reminder. †



*Lord Jesus, so that we may be witnesses to your presence among us, we pray—  
Be born in us,  
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

## Signs of the Season—Part II: Beggars

Paige Byrne Shortal

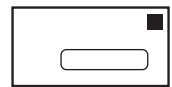
Beggars had a place in ancient times—it was a kind of profession, albeit a lowly one. Today, except for the pleasant clang of the bell outside stores, many of us encounter beggars only on social media or through the mail.

We used to toss all those beggar letters in the recycle bin, unopened and disregarded. Then a few years ago our family started doing something different. Throughout the weeks of

Advent, we save every appeal letter. After our Sunday family dinner with the Advent wreath candles still lit, we open those letters one by one. Our older children read the letters aloud while I prepare the envelopes and the youngest child affixes the stamps. My husband writes checks to each one. Usually, they're only for five dollars each, sometimes ten or twenty for an effort we want to support in a special way. We say a Hail Mary for each effort.

Children are beset by the world's

problems and feel powerless to do anything about them. They need their adults to show that they care and to take the lead in making some kind of response. Our small donations are but drops in the bucket, but at least for a moment we don't ignore the human suffering that is presented to us. It's worth a few dollars and a little time, rather than simply stepping over the beggar on the sidewalk—or the one in the mailbox. †



### WEEKDAY READINGS

December 11–16

**Monday, Advent Weekday:**

Is 35:1–10 / Lk 5:17–26

**Tuesday, Our Lady of Guadalupe:**

Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab / Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47

**Wednesday, St. Lucy:**

Is 40:25–31 / Mt 11:28–30

**Thursday, St. John of the Cross:**

Is 41:13–20 / Mt 11:11–15

**Friday, Advent Weekday:**

Is 48:17–19 / Mt 11:16–19

**Saturday, Advent Weekday:**

Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 / Mt 17:9a, 10–13