



# counsel

December 02, 2009 • Manila District • Volume XI Issue No. 46

## WORD

- Redemption is at hand to those who are vigilant for the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.

## THEME

- We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when we abound in love for one another.

## PROMISE

- "All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees." (Ps 25:10)

## ORDER

- "Strengthen your hearts to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones." (1 Thes 3:13)

## DIRECTION FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2009

- Visit members who have become "inactive" and let them feel our care and concern.

## REFLECTION

For the month of December 2009

**A**dvent is the time for us to turn our hearts into a manger...

**F**rom the moment we received the spirit of understanding and knowledge, we have been told that the season of Advent is a time to prepare for the coming of the Lord. But we tend to forget this. Next to Easter, Advent is perhaps the most important event in our Catholic calendar. Rightly so, for it provides us with the opportunity to present ourselves to Him as temples of the Holy Spirit, which is what we truly are.



**T**his season is celebrated in unison by what we call the 'Western Churches', which consists of Protestants, Catholics, and Anglicans. The Eastern Church, on the other hand, which includes the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox, and the Eastern-rite churches affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, does not observe a season of Advent in the Western sense. What the Eastern Church does is retain the original 40-day period of fasting, prayer, and reflection.

**A**nd this is where the Catholic Church can probably learn from our brethren in the Eastern Church because we Catholics frequently get caught up in the trimmings and commercial aspects of the season rather than the deeper meaning and essence of the celebration, which is **to fast, pray and reflect** on how we have lived our lives in the past and how we may prepare our hearts to become worthy 'mangers' for the Christ child when He comes.

**T**he season of Advent normally begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on the eve, or day before Christmas. Thus, this year, it begins on November 29, 2009 and ends when the sun sets on December 24, 2009. Christmas Eve then begins at sundown.

**I**n most churches, the decorations are purple or blue which are described as the royal colors to welcome the King. The importance and significance of the season is seen in the way its history has been shaped. Advent originated as a period during which converts prepared themselves for baptism through instruction, prayer, fasting, and reflection, much like the season of Lent. The length of the season varies from three days to six weeks, approximately 40 days, which is the length of time that Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for His ministry.

**I**n the Western Church to which we Catholics belong, the highlight of the Advent season is the coming of Jesus Christ, both in the manger in Bethlehem, and in the clouds of glory at the end of time. But as the Church progressed, Advent also became a time to prepare for the Second Coming, because in the early days of the church, many people were convinced that all the signs pointed to the imminent return of Christ. In time, Advent spread throughout the western Church and became fixed at its present length. Over the last 50 years, the Advent season has become a period of anticipation of the Nativity as well. And for many people today, especially shop retailers the season has become a platform for selling products, a time for making profit.

BUKÁS - LOÓB SA DIYÓS COVENANT COMMUNITY



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**Please read the reflection before or after the Prayer Meeting.**