

## **SREL Newsletter – 12.3.18**

Hello 8th Grade Parents,

In Religion class for the month of December, students will focus on the season of Advent and preparing for Christmas ([Chapter 10](#)).

The Church's Advent liturgies help us prepare to celebrate Christ's coming. At the beginning of Advent, the Scripture readings invite us to open our hearts, to be renewed in spirit, and to find ways of becoming more holy and pleasing to God. We are asked to wait vigilantly and quietly for Christ, who comes to us in unexpected ways each day and will come again in glory at the end of the world.

As Advent continues, we hear in the readings the voices of Isaiah and John the Baptizer telling us to prepare for the Lord's coming by repenting and making straight our paths. We are reminded that Jesus came for the poor, the sick, and the outcasts of society, and we remember that we are asked to reach out to others and to work for peace and justice. During the last week of Advent, the Church presents Mary as a model of faith. Mary said yes to God's invitation to be the mother of his Son. Mary trusted God completely. We learn from Mary that God's grace is always with us, strengthening and guiding us. God sends the Messiah to stand by our side. The Messiah is *Emmanuel*, "God with us."

For Catholics, Advent is a time of preparing spiritually for Christmas. We try to see with the eyes of faith. We try to be open to the voice of the Spirit within. We try to walk, each day, in the company of Jesus, our Savior. Christmas celebrations and customs are all about human relationships. The source of our celebration is not just the fact of the birth of Jesus. We also celebrate the effect that this one human being's life had on the world and its history. Like the shepherds and the Magi, we are called to be aware of Jesus' coming, to offer our gifts to him, and to share with others the miracle of his coming into the world as one of us. It is up to us to continue to echo the good news of the Incarnation in the world today.

Students will explain how reflecting on the O'Antiphons help us prepare for Christmas and they will identify some of the heralds who have awakened us to Christ's presence among us. They will have the chance to spend time with their Prayer Buddies.

Students will also prepare two songs for the Christmas Concert. Lyrics and a link for the songs can be found on the website and are attached. Students will be required to recite/sing the songs next week to ensure they know the lyrics for the concert.

Students can also participate in the Secret Santa activity. This will be explained today and forms are due back by Friday. Students will pick names next Monday. This is an optional activity and students do not have to participate if they do not wish.

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Mrs. Esquivel  
Mrs. Chandler