



Church of St. Uriel the Archangel

December 24-25, 2018

"Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us; and he will be called Wondrous God, Prince of Peace, and Father of future ages: and his reign will be without end."

(Is. 9:1, 5 and Lk. 1:33)

The Propers for the Sunday before Christ the King (November 18) concerns the apocalyptic writings from the Book of Daniel and the Gospel of Mark. The word "apocalypse" comes from the Greek which means to "unveil". In his apocalyptic proclamation, Daniel proclaimed that there will be a terrible struggle taking place among the nations, and that God will send forth his agent to protect Israel and that the faithful remnant would be spared.

Often in Jesus' teachings, He elaborated on these apocalyptic themes. Speaking to His followers just before going to the Cross, Jesus uses this apocalyptic language. He states, "...in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." (Mark 13:24-25) The question is, what does this Scriptural apocalyptic language have to do with Christmas and the birth of this Child?

A danger we face in the spiritual life is when we sentimentalize the New Testament, or the Person who stands at the center of it. The New Testament is not the story of a beguiling and charming itinerant spiritual teacher who taught us deep truths about God. Thus, Christmas is often unduly sentimentalized. We envision the pastoral setting of a baby surrounded by a loving mother and father who are in turn, looking adoringly at the baby. We see the animals looking on as shepherds arrive in time to share their message which had been given to them by an angel. We see a clear night with the stars out and angels hovering over a stable. While it is a pastoral scene in our minds, we can easily miss the seriousness of what is truly taking place.

The Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation is the story of a battle, the story of a great struggle. The New Testament is about God entering His world. C.S. Lewis describes this as God, entering into the world, "behind enemy lines." The birth of this Child is about the rightful King entering into His world, which had fallen under the influences of dark and twisted powers. The Gospels all speak of Satan, that personal power that has come tragically to rule in the hearts of individuals, nations, institutions, and culture.

It is the Cross where that great struggle, that great battle was finally and fully engaged. It is the Cross where Jesus did battle with all the various levels of dysfunction in the world. It is the Cross where the Prince of Peace confronts the prince of this world. This, my brothers and sisters, is what Christmas is truly about. God enters His world *behind enemy lines* so that on the Cross, God deals the mortal blow to Satan and all his minions.

May Jesus our Lord and Savior grant you the joy and peace in this holy season.

Pax Christi,
Fr. Russell A. Griffin, SSC
Rector

First Sunday of Advent
Sunday – December 2 [Advent Wreath Party]

Immaculate Conception
Saturday – December 8, 9:30AM Mass [Lady Chapel]

Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle
Thursday – December 21
9:30AM Mass

CHRISTMAS LITURGIES

Christmas Eve
Monday – December 24
5PM Mass

Christmas Day
Tuesday – December 25
10AM Mass

Christmas Flowers
In order to have the names of loved ones included on the Memorial list, please have flower memorials to St. Uriel's by Monday, December 17th.

St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
Wednesday – December 26
9:00am Holy Rosary, 9:30AM Mass

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
Thursday – December 27
9:30AM Mass

Holy Innocents
Friday – December 28
9:30AM Mass

The Holy Name of Jesus / Mary Mother of God
Tuesday – January 1, 2019
9:30AM Mass

The Feast of the Epiphany
Sunday – January 6, 2019
8:00am and 9:30AM, Mass

Annual Parish Meeting
Monday, January 28, 2019
6PM Mass and 7PM Meeting

Confessions: As scheduled or contact Fr. Griffin for appointment.