

December 2008

The Month of the Divine Infancy

By Br. John Marie Vianney, M.I.C.M., Tert., Prefect

[At the headquarters in Richmond, NH, the Third Order has a Regular Business Meeting on the First Saturday of the Month. The following is the Prefect's address at that meeting. The Prefect's email address is ToPrefect@Catholicism.org]

I greet you on the First Saturday, in the Month of the Divine Infancy, Our Lady's day when she visits Purgatory to take back to Heaven, we pray, many souls. I beg your prayers for our entire community and especially for all our tertiaries spread throughout the country and the world.

Looking over the calendar, this month we celebrate Marian feasts on Monday, the Immaculate Conception (also my first child's birthday), Our Lady of Guadalupe on Friday and of course the feast day that could be said to be an honor for the entire Holy Family, Christmas. We have the December Ember days on the 17th, 19th and 20th, days of fast, and we are in the midst of the Advent season. For the most part, the world will ignore these events. Save for the gloomy economic times, the world will celebrate only the festival time of this season and ignore the fasting, abstinence and mortification (not as rigorous as Lent) that is also part of this period.

We understand that the word Advent means *coming*. The four weeks of Advent represent the four thousand years (using the Vulgate as a guide) which preceded the coming of the Son of God into this world. During this holy season the Church calls us to enter into the feelings of sadness and longing for the promised Messiah, which filled the hearts of the Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament. It is a period of recollection and prayer, not of continual shopping and partying. Not of sales and indulgence. The true Christian ought to take advantage thereof, and by pious yearnings, entreat for the *coming* of the Son of God into his heart by grace, and into the world at large by spreading the Gospel. You want to give a gift to someone? Why not a Mass, a spiritual bouquet of prayers, the medal of the order to your spouse-tertiary, a novena of Holy Communions? And to those most needy, give them the Faith. If there was ever a time to rejoice about the Faith and spread the true message of Christ, is it not Advent?

Even in this society, which has little regard for human life, people still love babies. The birth of the little baby in Bethlehem 2000 years ago marks the most important date in the history of man. God takes on the mantle of man as a little innocent baby in order to save us. Shall we anticipate the coming of the Little Baby Jesus, or make this just a season of merry, without the preparation our soul really desires and requires?