

Spiritual Food

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“Paying attention... to God and each other”

Advent is a time of expectation, a time of preparation, a time of urgency. And we enter this season with vivid, violent reminders of the evils caused in our society by selfishness, ruthless ambition, twisted hatred and the craze for power at every level. This ugly drama is played out all over our world.

Scripture reminds us during this first week that Advent is also a time of warning. We must not allow ourselves to slip into the routine of ordinary life and to miss the opportunities that life presents to us. Advent is a time for us to recall lost opportunities, and of determining to take steps to miss fewer opportunities in the days ahead. It's a

time for us to pay attention, to be watchful. We need to prepare ourselves to live effectively and lovingly with life's tensions, and not only to be aware of our needs but also to the needs of others. *"May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all..."* - 1 Thessalonians 3:12.

Our God is He who loved us enough to enter the darkness with us in order to bring us into the light. The darkness still exists, but it is less intense, less ominous, because of Him. All is not right with the world, but Christ's call to "be watchful and pray always" is one which enables us to bring others into His Light. We are called to be careful, to be caring, to be care-givers, to watch out - not only for ourselves, but for our brothers and sisters who share the darkness and Light with us.

Especially as this year comes to a close, we reaffirm our belief in all that Jesus has promised and has already accomplished in us; and we see in this promise a reason to hope for so much more.... for a deepening of our own faith and love... for the power to overcome evil in ourselves and in our world... for the spread of the gospel... and for us to proclaim that the darkness that overshadows the present moment, whether from sin, sickness, poverty, sorrow, weakness or failure, will be dissipated and driven away by the Sun of Justice, the Word-Made-Flesh.





“Prepare the Way ... Maranatha”

This is a season of expectation and of hope. It is a time for us to listen again to God's promise of deliverance and reconciliation. It is a time for us to be reassured of His relentless love for each and all of us.

Perhaps we still walk along crooked paths. We might find it much easier to take detours around the Gospel challenges of Christian justice. There are still hills of conflict and valleys of depression on the road we walk. And we find ourselves so busy! There just doesn't seem to be enough time to worship and to pray. Our energies are all used up with work and home and family,

and preparations for the Christmas holiday. But Jesus is waiting, patiently, compassionately. He wants so very much to come into each of our lives - completely and totally. So we try again during these special days of Advent to clear the way for Him.

The central message of our Advent is that the Lord has come, He has taken away the curse of our sins, He has baptized us in the Holy Spirit, He has comforted us; He has come like a good shepherd to gather the lambs in His arms.

But His coming is an ongoing mystery. He needs us and uses us to "make straight His paths." We are called to hasten His coming in our own time and place. We continue to "prepare the way of the Lord." We continue to proclaim the

"good news": *‘Jesus, Emmanuel, God-With-Us, has Come, is Coming and will come!’*





“What are we to do?”

The crowds asked John an Advent question: "What are we to do?" Like people in every age, they were beset with fear, anxiety, and discouragement.

We have as many reasons as they to be afraid, to be filled with concern about health, economics and social evils. We are constantly faced with a barrage of images that show us - quite emphatically - how broken our world has become. Every day we are confronted with aggression, war, competition, greed, and the lust for property and power. There seems to be far too much for us to handle anymore: reminders of how vulnerable we really are; the growing number of the poor, homeless and

displaced, not only worldwide, but here at home as well; the effect of climate change and seeming unwillingness of leadership to do anything about it... how inept we really have become at being "brother's keeper."

Today's Scripture Readings give us a clear, precise and practical answer: "Shout for joy . . . exult with all your heart! Have no fear... be not discouraged!" (Zephaniah 3)

Paul tells us: "Rejoice in the Lord always! Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Then God's own peace will stand guard over your hearts and minds." (Phil.: 4)

John the Baptist answers very specifically in a different vein: "Give to him who has nothing; exact nothing unjustly; do not bully anyone; be content with your pay." (Luke: 3)

It is the face of Jesus we see when we look at the poor, the sick and the homeless. It is face of Jesus we see when confronted with troubles, suffering and failure. We see His beauty and power in all of the good things; we sense His crucified presence when touched by pain and sorrow; we are energized by the power of His resurrected presence when we are buried by weakness, defeat, or death in any form. Although the seasons change, our faith, like the sun, must remain constant.

In answer to our advent prayer: "What ought we to do?" the Church cries out: "Rejoice! The Lord is in your midst! God's own peace will stand guard over your hearts."

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Luke 1: 39-45.

“Being Bearers of the Christ”



Advent and Christmas invite us to dwell on the Infant in the Crib, but the adult Jesus, baptized by John, anointed by the Spirit, living in a world of turmoil and then identifying Himself fully with humanity's sinful, guilt-ridden condition. He stands with all human beings who yearn for a radical change of heart and life, who crave liberation from the power of evil, who seek release from all forms of oppression - religious, political, social and economic. He stands as the only One who can take away our fear and make clear our vision.

The spirit of Advent and Christmas is a mirror in which we see reflected the very

best that life can become. Through our faith and courage, we can help each other to put away our fears, to move from darkness to light, to begin to hear again the words of life. We can reach out to support - by the strength of our love and concern - those whose hands are feeble, whose knees are weak. Through our witness to God's love, so many who are crippled by doubt and despair might be able to walk again with courage and energy and new life.

Let us continue this mission each day of our lives; let us be God's holy people, and faithful disciples of Jesus; let us be light in darkness, peacemakers and life-givers, in every aspect of our lives. Only then can the words of Elizabeth echo through our voices: "*Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.*"

“The Year of Mission”



2019 has been declared the “Year of Mission.”

The Parish would like to put this as our emphasis for this coming year.

We encourage our BECs, Ministries and Parishioners in general to carry out some mission activity. There are numerous things we can think of - witnessing to our faith, to feeding program, to visit the sick and engage ourselves with some elderly parishioners through our visits, may be an outreach to people who are abandoned.

Let us read on the Gospel text of Luke 4: 16-20; the inaugural mission of Jesus.

We can also reflect upon Matthew 10: 1-4 – ‘The sending of the twelve on a mission’.

The church exists for mission not for beauty and self-glory. As our Holy Father, Pope Francis said, ‘the church must get dirty or we might say in our own language “Turun Padang.”’

I invite all Parishioners to make this year 2019 – d i f f e r e n t. We contemplate and we respond. There is something awaiting you.

Become a Healer, a Forgiver, a Peacemaker, a Proclaimer, a Care-giver, a Thirst quencher, a Feeder.

Jesus Mission needs you!

