

SAID ED - December 14, 2003

Potpourri of Seasonal Concerns

Today we light yet another candle on the Advent wreath. The Lord is coming! Are your hearts ready? You still have time to prepare! This week's column is a potpourri of seasonal concerns.

First let me apologize for any confusion that a previous column may have caused regarding postures for mass. The new General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM) asks that we stand from the Lord's Prayer until after Communion at which time we may kneel or sit. A few weeks ago I wrote that the universal practice in the church in other parts of the world is to stand for the entire Eucharistic Prayer. (Recall that the Eucharist Prayer II (the oldest) says: "We thank You for counting us worthy to STAND here in your presence"). However, it has been the practice in our country for over 30 years to kneel for the Eucharistic Prayer. The custom is reflected in the USA Bishop's Instructions and remains in force in the new GIRM. I tried to explain this, but clearly I didn't do it clearly enough.

So, here's what we are expected to do: STAND after the Preparation of the Gifts, KNEEL at the Holy, Holy, Holy; STAND at the Lord's Prayer until after you receive Communion, then kneel or sit as you desire. I hope this helps.

Advent is the season that we watch and wait for the Savior, a time of preparation for the Christmas season. It is a season of joyful anticipation, but not everyone is filled with joy. The experts among us report that domestic violence increases dramatically during the holiday season. The stress of anticipating the Christmas season can put people in a tailspin. Examples of this are doing one or all the following in excess: spending money, eating, drinking, partying or running around, neglecting or acting uncharitably toward family members who cannot or will not behave as we might expect. Violence is often part of family life when the pace picks up, when emotions are high, when the normal world looks loving and you sense your family is not.

Our liturgy in this season often focuses on the family life, on searching for ways to prepare spiritually and in exploring charitable options to make our families more Christ-like. The opportunities to become more ideal as a family are endless, but we have to always remember becoming ideal is an ongoing process. We need to look creatively at how forgiveness, personal kindness and healthy activities can improve our journey to come closer to the ideal as we await the coming of Christ. If creative ways of improving our family life are part of the routine of life, perhaps it will help avoid violence in our homes. If you are dealing with domestic violence and you do not know where to turn, please feel free to give any staff member a call at the Parish Office. We will do every thing we can to help you find a path to a solution.

And lastly, since people many have a difficult time in the holiday season. The loss of loved ones and fond memories of years gone by often leaves people feeling "blue." This year we are cosponsoring a special celebration to help people who find themselves sad and lonely at this time of year. It is called "Blue Christmas" and will be held at the Mountain Rise United Methodist Church on Rt. 31 next Sunday afternoon (Dec. 21) at 2:30PM. All are invited to this healing and consoling service.

Have a great week! And remember the Lord is coming. Maranatha!

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