

MESSAGE FROM THE LAPTOP

MARANATHA, COME LORD JESUS, COME!

Sunday Greetings Family of HNOJ & HC:

Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus is the psalm response for the final Ordinary Time Mass on the Saturday prior to the First Sunday of Advent in the Year II cycle of weekday readings. For the last eight + years, I have not had the pleasure of celebrating a Saturday morning Mass since I have been on my own in Otisville and Saturday evening now counts as my Mass for the day. But I have developed, early on in my priesthood, substituting the next days readings as the scripture selection for Night Prayer. And Friday Night Prayer on November 27 led me to this wonderful psalm verse that set off a trigger of memories from my life prior to Neumann Residence & St. Joseph Seminary days. It was this period of time back in 1980 thereabouts that I, along with my brother and a seminarian who was given a pastoral year and was working in our parish, joined my father who was assigned to be in Philadelphia, PA to photograph the Army – Navy game that year. It was my first or second time being in Philly for the big event and it was extra special to be in the midst of all the hoopla that surrounded the game. We arrived in Philadelphia Thursday afternoon and settled into the hotel where the Army team was staying. Friday, I toured Philadelphia with my brother and the seminarian and visited all the historical and religious sites. Saturday morning, the seminarian and I walked to the Cathedral of St. Peter & St. Paul and the readings for Mass were the ones that I mentioned to begin this reflection. That proclamation of Maranatha in the psalm stuck me very deeply. I had heard the word and its meaning through discussions that were offered at the Neumann residence that I attended as a college student. But, it really gripped me at that Mass in the cathedral that had me thinking about my relationship with Jesus and how I needed to cultivate a much deeper relationship through more fervent prayer, spiritual reading, and the procurement of publications that would help to enhance my life as a seminarian and, God so deciding, the priest He would call me to be as time evolved. That time spent in Philadelphia was truly God sent since it afforded me, along with my brother and Bill the seminarian, appreciation for the historical and, for me, the beauty and wonder for our Catholic Church and the life I was discerning that God was leading me toward.

Now, we have begun our journey into the wonderful season of Advent with its two-fold layout that helps us to appreciate the initial message of focusing on life as it progresses toward the Kingdom and our time here on earth that plays a major factor in reaching our goal. Everything we experience going on around us is specifically pitched just toward Christmas Day and the material aspect of the day at that. There is no element toward faith and the true meaning of Christmas that is ever addressed in any commercials that pop up anywhere in the media. We need to make the effort to search out the media outlets that will support our efforts to find the true “reason for the season” that will help us to focus and leave the world behind. One of the elements that has been incredibly special to me has been attending the annual presentation of Handel’s Messiah that is offered at the Cadet Chapel at West Point on the Second Sunday of Advent each year. I attended on my own back in the early years of this century when I first became pastor in Hyde Park, and I have made it a point to share it with parishioners each year since that first time. Sadly, it shall not be taking place this year due to the pandemic and it seems the start to Advent would be deflated for me. But thankfully I paid attention to the monthly mailing from EWTN highlighting programs for the month and Handel’s Messiah jumped right out at me for the **IN CONCERT** presentation this past Sunday. I made sure it got DVR’d so I can appreciate it again and again and maybe have a “viewing party” as well. I want to encourage that you take advantage of what is available on the Catholic Media sources that are supported by our parishes like **FORMED, THE AUGUSTINE INSTITUTE, EWTN ONLINE, WORD ON FIRE AND MORE.**

Finally: **Tuesday of this week is the Solemnity of The Immaculate Conception, Holy Day of Obligation and Privilege for us. Please notice the schedule of Masses available for both parishes to plan when to attend.**

That is all for now. **GO FORTH AND ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD. MANY BLESSINGS FOR THE WEEK!!!!**

Fr. Mike