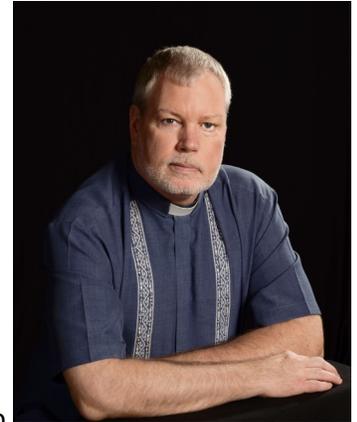




Pastor's Page



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Broadly speaking, the season of Advent has a two-fold character. **First**, it is meant to remind us of our need to remain vigilant and alert for the “Parousia”—the coming of the Lord Jesus in glory at the end of time to consummate his saving work and to judge the living and the dead. We begin the new liturgical year by focusing our attention on the end of time and the ultimate and final conclusion of our temporal existence. But there is a **second** purpose to Advent, namely to help us to prepare to celebrate the mystery of the “Incarnation”—the first coming of Jesus when he appeared in our midst long ago clothed in human flesh as a new-born babe placed in a manger in a stable in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of Caesar Augustus. It is these two comings (“advents”) of Christ that the Season of Advent offers us the opportunity to more deeply celebrate and prepare for.

As the opening portion annually of a new Liturgical Year, Advent also begins a new cycle of readings from the Sacred Scriptures. This Advent we move to Year B, the second year in the three-year cycle of the Sunday Lectionary. Year B is the year in which Saint Mark’s gospel holds pride of place and is the centerpiece of the Scriptural proclamation and preaching at our Sunday Masses. A mere 16 chapters in length, the Gospel of Saint Mark is the shortest of all four of the canonical gospels. One could easily read two chapters a day, and have the entire gospel read in just over a week! Indeed, I would strongly encourage parishioners to make the commitment and to take the time to read Mark’s entire gospel, so as to get something of an impression of the Jesus that we encounter in this version of the Good News. For example, Mark’s Jesus is a man continually on the move, someone filled with a great sense of urgency and purpose as he travels throughout and around the ancient Holy Land, proclaiming the nearness of God’s kingdom, calling all to conversion, healing the sick, expelling evil spirits, engaging in controversies and disputes with the religious authorities and calling disciples to follow him in the way of the cross.

Try to get a feel for Mark’s Jesus, the man he was, the message he proclaimed, the way he lived and the purpose for which he died. While the four canonical gospels all give authentic portraits of Jesus, they each also give unique portraits to one degree or another. Use the early portions of the Advent season to become more acquainted and familiar with the Jesus of Mark, the Jesus whose portrait will be placed before us throughout nearly the entire liturgical year to come.

A blessed Advent to all,

Fr. Kevin