

## 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent

The readings and gospel call us to reflect on our covenant relationship with the Trinity; of our being adopted family members of the Trinity, and, of the benefits and obligations, that being members of the Trinity's family brings us. We are called to work on deepening our relationship with the Trinity and others, through our obedience to the Trinity's truths and through our docility to the Trinity's will, in our lives. Through our docility and obedience, we grow into being more intimate daughters and sons of the Father, and, more intimate brothers and sisters of Christ. The prophet Isaiah reminds us, that we often fail to live out our filial relationship, with the Trinity and others, and therefore, we need to restore that filial relationship, as the prophet Isaiah reminds, and Christ calls us to, in various gospel parables, especially the prodigal son. For us to access the Trinity's loving compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, we need to show the same desire and action to the Father, the prodigal son showed to his father, contrition and repentance, of our sins.

One important aspect of repentance, which in the gospel, Christ reminds us of, when He calls us to be watchful and alert, involves conversion of our thoughts, words, and actions. At this mass and beyond, we need to take Christ's admonition, warning, to heart regarding examining what we allow to influence, our heart, mind, and will so we can grow into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Trinity and others. We need to ask the Trinity, for the graces we need to strengthen the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to strengthen the Theological and Cardinal virtues, so we can more thoroughly examine our thoughts, words, and deeds; in order to find and avoid those influences, situations, and actions, which lead us to sin, so as to become more intimate loving adopted members of the Trinity's family, through more faithful obedience to the Trinity's will and truths.

At this mass, as we are waiting to receive the most holy Body & Blood of our Lord & Savior, in the consecrated host, we need to prepare our soul, to more fruitfully receive the graces, the Trinity give us, when we consume our Lord & Savior, so as to strengthen the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit; and to strengthen the Theological and Cardinal virtues. After consuming our Lord & Savior, will we spend the quiet meditation time given us, to ask the Trinity for the help we need to continue to be open to Their graces? During this week, will we spend some time asking the Trinity for the help we need to be more diligent, in examining our lives, to find and avoid those influences, situations, and actions which lead us to sin? When we do find, we have not been diligent in examining our lives, to find and avoid those influences, situations, and actions which lead us to sin, will we take some time to think about the effects of those sins have on our relationship with the Trinity. Will we reflect on the fact that any and all sin weakens our bond with the Trinity, as all sin is an embrace of a self-centered love, rather than an embracing of the Trinity's sacrificial love, which is why we need to show contrition and repentance, so the Trinity can restore our relationship with the Them to its fullest, especially through Their most precious means of healing our relationship with Them, through the sacrament of Confession.

When we fail to diligently examine our lives to find and avoid those influences, situations, and actions which lead us to sin, will we make use of the sacrament of Confession, so as to receive the graces we need, to grow in awareness that any and all sin weakens our intimate relationship with the Trinity and to grow in our ability to continue to find and avoid those influences, situations, and actions which lead us to sin.

Before we continue on with the Mass, let us ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit now, and especially when we consume our Lord in the Eucharist so we can be open to the Trinity's graces; so as to strengthen the Fruits and Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to strengthen the Theological and Cardinal

virtues; so as to experience a spiritually fruitful Advent; thereby preparing our heart, mind, and will to have a more holy, transcendent Christmas season.