



DIOCESE OF FAIRBANKS

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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Advent Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.” These are the first words from the Opening Prayer, Collect, that will be proclaimed for the First Sunday of Advent. As we begin Advent, we recognize that fiery anticipation to encounter Christ at his birth.

This interior response of heart, mind, body and soul to “run forth” is so beautifully proclaimed at the Annunciation when Mary’s “yes” to God and being filled with the very body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ drives her to move in haste to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Granted, during these days of rising numbers of COVID-19 cases throughout the State of Alaska, there is not much “running forth” as people are limiting their contact out of respect for another’s health and well-being. The challenging side of this amidst the diminishing hours of daylight, 7 minutes a day in Fairbanks, the limited contact compounds challenges and puts all of us to the test.

This opening prayer invites us to meet Christ with “righteous deeds”. As we were reminded in the Gospel from the Solemnity of Christ the King, Matthew 25, we need to reach out to those suffering members of the Body of Christ who are in need of food, clothing, shelter and hungering to visit. During these times of caution and concern, may we run forth with great intention to share what fruits of the Holy Spirit, “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” It is these righteous deeds of charity that will burn away the darkness and fill hearts and minds with consolation and hope.

As Mary greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist jumped for joy in his mother’s womb. May we run forth the next four weeks of Advent ready for the Sacred Dance of life celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Sincerely in Christ’s peace,

†Most Reverend Chad W. Zielinski
Catholic Bishop of Northern Alaska
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