

Today the beautiful Season of Advent begins. During the first part of this short Season of joyful and quiet waiting, the Church meditates upon Jesus' return at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. Beginning on December 17, the Church meditates upon the Lord's birth, when our God became visible in the humanity of his beloved Son.

Jesus came to earth as the definitive revelation of God's love for man: to overthrow the principalities and powers of this world that hold us captive and make us sharers in the divine life. Therefore, in Advent we seek to place ourselves in the presence of that love through daily prayer and meditation on the word of God in Holy Scripture. To assist you in this, there are copies of *Five Minutes with the Word* in the back of the church. I encourage you to take a copy home with you to use throughout the Season. If you are not ready yet to return to Mass in person, we will keep copies in the rectory. Simply drop by the rectory during Monday through Friday office hours, 9am to 2pm, to pick up a copy.

Jesus came to earth to heal us of our sins and reconcile us to our heavenly Father. Therefore, in Advent we seek to mortify our sinful behaviors and be reconciled to God and one another through a sincere confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Besides the regular confession time of Saturdays from 3:00-4:00 pm, confessions will also be heard before Christmas on Saturday, December 19, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm and Wednesday, December 23 from 6:30-7:30 pm. Confessions are heard in the open church, one person in church at a time, with proper social distancing, sanitizing and mask wearing. The Knights of Columbus will be assisting with all the logistics.

Jesus came to earth to restore unity to the human race with his gift of peace. Therefore, in Advent we seek to reach out to our neighbors in need. The parish gives us a number of ways to do this: donating food to the parish pantry; giving to the parish poor box; donating a Target gift card (or the money for one) through the Angel Tree project; clothing the homeless and refugees through the parish coat and blanket drive.

We know that the joy of Christmas comes to dwell in the hearts of those who humbly give of themselves to others in imitation of the Savior who was born for us. Through the good works commended to us by Jesus, may we keep this holy season of Advent well for each other's sake, that the healing light of Christ may shine more brightly in the midst of the pandemic, especially upon those most in need of God's mercy.

Yours in Christ,

Father Walter