

## *NOTES FROM FR. SEÁN*

November 29, 2020

### **In Today's Gospel**

"Be watchful! Be alert!" (Mk 13:33a) These are the words from Jesus in today's gospel. With these words, Jesus warns the apostles and us that we must always be prepared for the coming of the Lord. As we begin this season of Advent, our eyes are first turned not toward the coming of Christ as a child on Christmas, but rather toward his second coming.

Even as we spend this Advent season preparing for Christmas, we must also prepare for the second coming of Christ. We must continually prepare for his second coming because we "do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or a cockcrow, or in the morning." (Mk 13:35) With these words, Jesus is telling us again that we must be prepared at all times for his second coming. We do not know when we will see Christ again. Not only do we not know when the second coming will occur, but we also do not know when Christ walks among us.

In the parable of the Judgement of the Nations (Mt 25:31-36) that we heard last Sunday, Jesus tells us that when we act with mercy toward the least of our brothers, we are acting with mercy toward him. When we reject the least among us, we reject the Son of Man. We know that Christ walks among us, not as a king or a celebrity, but in the least of our brothers and sisters.

We must be alert, not only for the second coming of Christ, the goats in the parable were alert for that; we must be watchful and alert for Christ in our world today.

### **Advent**

Today, we begin the season of Advent. This marks the start of a new Liturgical year and a new journey through Scripture and salvation history. This year we will be focusing on the gospels of Mark and John for our Sunday Readings. The first readings present the principal messianic prophecies from the Old Testament. The gospels each have a different focus. The first Sunday reading exhorts us to watch and be ready, the second and third Sundays focus on the message of John the Baptist, and the fourth Sunday focuses on Mary.

Advent is a season of preparation in anticipation of the Birth of Christ. The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means coming. Although the length and practices of Advent have changed throughout the history of the Church, it has its roots in the ancient traditions of the Church.

It is difficult to put a specific date on the origin of Advent. As with many traditions in the Church, the observance of Advent seems to have started as a local observance before spreading to the universal Church. In 380, the Council of Saragossa (in modern-day Spain) ordered a three-week fast, beginning December 17th, before the Feast of the Epiphany. St. Gregory of Tours wrote, in the *History of the Franks*, that St. Perpetuus (c.480) decreed a fast three times a week from the feast of

St. Martin (November 11th) until Christmas. Advent did not find its way to Rome until the 6th century, where it was associated with Christmas since the Epiphany was not celebrated in Rome at that time.

Regardless of the history of Advent, let us take this time to prepare ourselves to celebrate his comming into the world 2,000 years ago, his second coming in the future, and his coming into our hearts today.

### **Covid-19**

As a result of the restrictions that the Archdiocese of Detroit has instated in response to the latest directions from the State of Michigan, we are again canceling all events not directly related to Liturgy, Evangelization (Encounter), Faith Formation (Grow), or Evangelical Charity (Witness).

Although the current restrictions only extend until December 8th, we should not be surprised if the restrictions are extended. If you have questions regarding any events, please contact the parish office.

### **Faith Formation**

Please note that these restrictions should have no impact on Faith Formation classes for our parishes' children. Since the start of the school year, Faith Formation has been meeting online, using Zoom. Although the online format has many difficulties, it does allow for safety. I recognize that some children may have difficulty with the online format. Most of their regular classes are online. It can be challenging for them to stay focused for another hour in front of the computer screen.

One unique opportunity that the online format gives to parents is the opportunity to observe your child's class. By sitting in, you can encourage your child by showing them the importance of our faith. You can help them to stay focused, and you may just learn something yourself. I encourage you to take the information covered in class on Monday night and reinforce it throughout the week.

View this full bulletin on the *Parish Life* tab on our webpage.