

From Your Pastor

Welcome to a New Church Year! It Is Advent. Come, Lord Jesus!

In addition to the Sundays that make up Advent and the Christmas Season – and Lent and Eastertide, there are thirty-four Sundays of the Church year. Two weekends ago, we celebrated the last of those Sundays. Interestingly, rather than having the name “the Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time,” the last Sunday of the Church Year is celebrated as the ***Solemnity of Christ the King***. This Solemnity is a beautiful reminder that Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is by the will of the Father the Lord and King of all creation. In the Book of Revelation Jesus identifies himself as the *Alpha* and the *Omega*, the beginning and the end of all things. Saint Paul says of Jesus in his Letter to the Colossians, “All things were created through him and for him” (Col 1:16).

Today the Church celebrates the third of the ***Sundays of Advent***, which has traditionally been known as *Gaudete* or “Rejoice” Sunday. One of the great joys of Catholicism lies in the multiple opportunities we have to make a new beginning in our relationship with the Lord Jesus. Every time we come to the Eucharist, we meet Christ anew, in his Word and in his Body and Blood, and we are given the grace we need to live more fully as his disciples. When I sin in my relationship with the Lord or with my neighbor, the Sacrament of Penance is always available to me – both for the forgiveness of my sins and for the grace I need to avoid sin in the future. For this we rejoice!

Advent is the season in which we prepare to celebrate Christmas, the first coming of Jesus Christ among us in Bethlehem as our Lord and Savior. It is also the season in which we are called to heighten our anticipation that the Lord will come again. The words we pray at every Eucharist take on special meaning in Advent: “We wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.” As we anticipate the Lord’s two comings, Advent is a wonderful opportunity for each of us to look as well at the

quality of our relationship with the Lord and with one another.

There is no question that while being one of the holiest times of the year for us Catholics, Advent is also one of the busiest. It is very easy to get so caught up in the activity of the season that we miss one of the great opportunities we have during the year to ask the Lord’s help in our lives. That would be a shame, because Advent is a great time for us to stop and to ask the Lord’s forgiveness for our sins, to welcome him again into our lives, and to live with the grace and peace that God wishes for us.

Confession in the Sacrament of Penance is an essential part of our life in Christ. The Sacrament of Penance is the principal way by which our sins are forgiven and we are reconciled with God and with one another. Every Saturday from 3:00–4:00 pm in the lower church, the opportunity is there for us to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance by individual confession. This Monday, December 14, at 7:00 PM, there will be a special opportunity for individual confession during our annual Advent Penance Service in the upper church. If confession in the Sacrament of Penance is something that you have not celebrated in a while, the Advent Season is the perfect opportunity for you to let it become a part again of your life in Christ. The Fathers of the Assumptionist Community across the street will be joining those of us whom you see regularly at Sunday Mass and throughout the week. Come to the Lord in the Sacrament of Penance and experience the grace of reconciliation that the Lord wants to show you as we approach Christmas. Let this Advent be a time for us to welcome that grace fully into our lives.

May our prayer this Advent be wholeheartedly that of the earliest Christian communities:

Maran atha! Come, Lord Jesus!



God bless each of you.

Mrs. Fay