

A Note from the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioners,

Last Sunday, Pope Francis, in his address to the people gathered in St. Peter's Square, said Advent is a time given to us "to welcome the Lord who comes to meet us, to verify our desire for God, to look ahead and prepare ourselves for the return of Christ."

The Pope went on to say Christ will return again at Christmas, when we remember how he came to us "in the humility of the human condition." However, Christ also comes to each of us "every time we are disposed to receive him, and he will come again at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. Because of this we must always be watchful and attentive to the Lord, with the hope of meeting him."

Of course, the Holy Father was thinking of those words in the Gospel of Mark last Sunday for the beginning of Advent. As we heard, Jesus said, "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come!"

Jesus did not want to frighten anyone, but rather he wanted to help everyone realize that we have to look for him and wait for him with joyful anticipation. We should always look forward to the ways that Jesus comes to us, now and in the future.

In fact, he promised never to leave us alone, so we should be confident he is with us even though we look forward to his coming to us. By our Baptism, we are one with him. We are never separated from him except when we choose to be (when we sin). However, Jesus desires us to be close to him and he died on the cross and rose from the dead to bring us new life. Jesus saves us from sin.

Jesus also strengthens our mind, heart and soul every time we pray to him and seek to welcome Him - at Mass and in every way in our life. The whole reason Jesus was born was to show us the way and lead us to heaven. May Advent be a time for each of us when we desire once again to welcome Jesus and stay close to him. This past Friday, we recalled how his earthly mother Mary was the first to welcome him. May we follow her example waiting for him with trust and love.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monsignor Giandurco". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.