

A Note from the Pastor

Dear Parishioners,

With the arrival of December, the season of Advent begins. It is hard to believe that we are approaching the end of 2019, and actually the new Church calendar year begins now.

The season of Advent is best described as a time of joyful anticipation. At one time, Advent was primarily a penitential season, much like Lent, but the focus has changed since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's. We are still encouraged to renew our prayer life before the celebration of Christmas begins, but, for example, there are no set times of fasting and abstinence as there are during Lent.

That being said, it is still a very good idea to do all we can to strengthen our prayer life during Advent and seek to turn away from sin. Our parish, and the whole Church, tries to provide extra times for the sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent, and the children in St. Patrick's School and the Religious Education Program will have the opportunity for confession before the Christmas break. For everyone else, Reconciliation Monday during Advent, as it is called, will be on December 16 from 4:00pm until 8:00pm, with other extra times for confession on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday after that. (If you receive envelopes for the collection, you have probably already received the Advent and Christmas schedules. Schedules are likewise included in this bulletin. Please also note the former Midnight Mass will begin at 11:00PM on Christmas Eve.)

During Advent, the Church does ask us to focus on the coming of Christ. However, the Church asks us to do that in two ways. First, we are asked to prepare ourselves for the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. That means to be ready to receive Jesus now and always with a clean heart. Second, toward the end of Advent, we focus more on the birth of Jesus, the First Coming, so that we can celebrate the great gift of the Savior with tremendous joy. Blessed Advent!

Sincerely in Christ,

Monsignor Giandurco