

Dear Parishioners,

Advent is a beautifully rich season. It is a time of waiting to celebrate the birth of the Lord and to prepare for his coming again. The question is this: how do we wait? The Church has given us this wonderful season of Advent as a time for us to be vigilant, to pay attention to the signs of the times. Advent is a penitential season which means we acknowledge the sinfulness of our lives and seek the mercy of God. Jesus gave his life for the salvation of the world; in preparation to celebrate his birth, we are given the opportunity to come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to receive the gracious mercy of our God through the absolution of our sins. On Sunday, December 10, we will celebrate Communal Penance as a parish at 5:00 p.m. Many people find this way of celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation to have great meaning in their lives. As a community we rejoice in the mercy of God who frees us from the mighty grip of shame and guilt and fills our souls with great joy.

We also remember that we are "advent people" waiting for the Lord to come in glory on the last day. How do we wait? These four weeks of Advent remind us not only of the marvelous story of Jesus' birth, but also of the reality of his coming again in glory. We are given these weeks of Advent at the beginning of the liturgical year as a time to develop spiritual habits of vigilance. This year our parish is offering daily reflections for prayer and contemplation. I would like to suggest that you take a few minutes each day during this Advent Season to read the daily reflections provided in the enclosed booklet. It is my hope that in our vigilance for the coming of the Lord, these daily reflections will inspire us to keep our eyes and hearts open to the presence of Christ in our midst right now.

You see, we do not wait just for the coming of the Lord on the last day. Our vigilance includes an awareness of his presence in our lives today. If we do not see him now; if we take his presence for granted in this moment, how will we recognize him on the last day?

My prayer for you is that this Advent season will also be a very joyful time, *"Deliver us Lord from every evil and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy, keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety, as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ."*

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel