

Dear Friends,

Maybe there is a spiritual silver lining in this economic mess we're in. It is sad that the retail industry is going to suffer huge losses this year. They are predicting that sales are going to be very weak this year. People will not be shopping as much. We are not going to spend as much money on gifts, decorations, or all the trappings of a lovely Christmas this year. No one can afford it.

So, where is the spiritual silver lining? Maybe we're all going to have a little more time for Advent. In all the hustle and expense to make Christmas such an important holiday, we tend to lose sight of the holiness of Advent. Advent prepares us to celebrate the birth of Christ with great joy. Can we do that with all the stress and worry we go through? When we spend the Advent season spending more than we can afford to buy presents that could possibly be returned because they're not just right, Christmas becomes nothing more than a retail holiday. However, when we make the decision to make Advent a time of spiritual preparation, Christmas becomes a holy day of immeasurable value.

For this reason, we are going to make a few noticeable changes in how we worship. We are going to slow things down a little bit. Perhaps the biggest thing you will notice is that we will spend a few more seconds in silent prayer so that we can focus on the fact that we are waiting. We are waiting to celebrate the birth of Christ. We are waiting for Jesus to come again in glory. We are waiting to experience an enlightening experience of God's love for us. There will be a few more seconds of prayer between the readings and in a few other places in the Mass. Don't worry; the Mass will not be much longer than it already is now. However, the periods of silence will highlight a sense of anticipation – which is good for us. We are Advent people. Through our entire lives we are waiting for the Lord. If we do not see him now, or experience his presence in the Mass, maybe all we need is a little more silence, a little more time to be quiet and still.

In joyful hope,
Fr. Tim Seigel