

Dear Friends,

We have begun our Advent journey. Each year, it seems that time seems to go by faster and faster. Already, we have come to a new year in the Church and shortly our calendars will be changing to 2019. Right now, with all the “holiday” gatherings, parties, and other social engagements we have, our schedules are filling up. The day to day rhythm of life in the world can be more frenzied this time of year. This is precisely why our Holy Mother the Church reminds us that we need to step back, take a deep breath, and soak in the silence so that we might be able to hear God’s voice and prepare our hearts for His coming anew at Christmas.

As we end the year, it is a good time to evaluate things in the light of God’s plan for our lives. Only as we take the time to look at things prayerfully, will we be able to recognize those things that are not in accord with God’s will. Perhaps there is something that you know straight away that is getting in the way of your relationship with God or others. For others, it might take more time to realize what needs to change. Take some time to listen to the still small voice of Jesus in your heart to inspire you to make a plan for the days ahead. Perhaps, He will inspire you to add silence to your routine on a daily basis in order to slow down and hear His voice.

Before you know it, Christmas will be here. Now is the time to prepare for the encounter. Jesus said that He’ll come when we least expect it, “like a thief in the night.” This week He tells us, *“Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man.”* (Lk 21:34-36)

I know a lot of addicts that struggle during this time of year for many reasons, and it’s a hot topic at many 12 step meetings, as folks are attentive to their weaknesses. Many will attend more meetings to get the strength they need and remind themselves and others of the pitfalls that the world encourages us to be distracted about during this season. For us in the family of the parish, it’s a great time to encourage one another to focus on what is most important. We have many opportunities to go to the fount of life giving water of the Sacraments and to order our lives according to way of peace and love that God has shown us. There is no more perfect guide for us in this regard than our Blessed Mother. Always ready to help and guide us, she is presented to us in these days as the Immaculate Conception (**December 8th**) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (**December 12th**). For the Immaculate Conception, we will have a multilingual Mass on **December 7th** (First Friday) at 7:30 pm and then the regular daily Mass at 8:00 am on December 8th. On December 12th, we will have a full day of festivities starting at 5:00 am with serenading Mama Mary in the church and then later that day, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo will be with us to celebrate the Mass at 7:00 pm.

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and to check out the full Advent/Christmas calendar as you look at the days ahead and commend yourself to Mary this Advent. As Jesus tells us this week, “Be vigilant at all times and pray...” and walk with Mary to the Nativity.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,



Fr. Jack D. Shrum

Pastor