

FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

Watching, Acting, & Living

Faith always gives us something to marvel at – the great issues of eternity and Godself, but also the little things that seem to violate the laws of various disciplines. For example, three Persons in One God, and the reference to Sunday as the “eighth day” in a seven-day week. We find it not only in math, but also in the church year. We begin this new church year not at the beginning of the story (creation), but at the end. In all three cycles of the Lectionary (this year is cycle B) for the first Sunday of Advent, the readings are about the end time – parousia in Greek (a great Scrabble word if you have a lot of vowels), when Christ will return to establish His kingdom in its fullness, with this world ending and a new reality coming forth.

The reason that we begin at the end is because, as Christians, we live for the future, live for eternal life. We live in incredible hope because this life is just a foretaste, an inkling of what God has in store for us. We have this hope because of what God has done and revealed to us in the past. We know where we are headed, because we know where we came from and who has led and does lead us. During Advent, we take time to reflect on and pray about this journey. We begin by listening to the words Christ spoke almost two millennia ago, but which he still speaks to us today: WATCH! Watch for the day of His return, which will occur at a day and hour which “no one knows but our heavenly Father.” (Mt 24: 36)

But the watching for the day is never a stand-around-and-wait for it to come life. Christianity is not a stand around and wait religion; remember the angel at the ascension of the Lord. “Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.” (Acts 1: 11) Rather, we are meant to be people of action who have their eyes and ears open to the day of the Lord’s return. We see this in today’s Gospel. The Master of the house gives each servant his tasks to do, but orders them all to be on watch for his return. The watchman does not watch to warn them that they had better get to work because he sees the Master on the horizon, as if they could sluff off until that point. They work all everyday so that they can present to the Master upon his return a household and fields that have been well tended, well kept. The watching is not at odds with the acting, but rather, they work together keeping an eye on the prize and striving towards it. (Just think of the parent with a baby who works around the house doing other things than constantly tending to the baby, yet is always alert to the needs of the child.)

Through this advent season, let’s reflect on watching, acting, and living for the coming of Christ. Let’s make sure that our spiritual senses are alert, and we are doing the work of God. Then we have nothing to fear at his return.

Me? An Hour in Church? What Would I Do? What Would I Say?

Last Sunday I asked people to consider spending an hour or part of an hour in prayer before the Eucharist during our monthly Exposition (sort of a Christ of the Month gift). I know that a number of people would be willing, but are asking themselves what would they do during that hour. Well, here’s some things you can do. ❖ Pray in your own words (He doesn’t correct your grammar) ❖ Pray using the prayers you know ❖ Pray using words you don’t know (Bring a prayer book) ❖ Pray for yourself, your family, your friends, your parish ❖ Pray for the Church, your country, the world. ❖ Listen in silence ❖ Read the Bible ❖ Read spiritual books ❖ Just sit and think with Christ ❖ Just sit ❖ Rest with the Lord ❖ Fall asleep (Pope Francis said it was OK) ❖ Ask what the Lord is calling you to do ❖ Write to the Lord (postage is free) ❖ Relax with the Lord. After a few times, you’ll be amazed at how the time passes. *Happy Advent – Fr. Jeff*