

November 24–25, 2018

Dear Parishioners,

The penultimate verse of the Book of Revelation is an ancient prayer: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (22:20). This is the Church’s supplication for all time. We, who are the beloved Bride of Christ, pray for the Bridegroom’s coming: “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come’” (22:17). This hopeful waiting—this yearning—lies at the heart of Advent. We pray for the Lord to come to complete his work of salvation in the world and to fulfill our loftiest aspirations and deepest desires.

The Church teaches that, “Advent has a two-fold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s first coming to us is remembered, and as a season when that remembrance directs our mind and heart to await Christ’s second coming at the end of time” (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, no. 39). Therefore, the theme of Advent is active, joyful, and hopeful waiting for the Lord’s coming.

Yet it can be difficult to live in the expectation of this “blessed hope” (as we pray in the Embolism of Mass each Sunday) with so much going on—both at home, with getting ready for the holidays, and in the Church, with the many feast days at this time of year. As a help, I have sent to all registered parishioners a Christmas card that contains the schedule of Masses, confessions, and other events for the season. I hope you will be able to participate in these Advent activities.

During Advent, the Angelus will be prayed five minutes before each Mass. This is a beautiful prayer that recounts, in capsule form, the Incarnation (Christ’s coming among us as a man). Following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who welcomed the Son of God at the Annunciation, we seek to welcome Christ into our lives. With that in mind, please arrive at Mass early to pray the Angelus.

I also encourage you to receive the Sacrament of Penance, especially if it’s been a while since your last confession. This is a great preparation for Christmas, and another way of welcoming the Lord Jesus. Please note that there will be a Penance Service (the individual rite of confession, with multiple priests on hand) on December 6 at 6:30pm.

The Book of Revelation presents a beautiful Advent image of Christ, and his desire to be a part of our lives: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me” (3:20).

May we open wide the door of our lives to the Son of God this Advent season, to welcome Emmanuel, “God with us.”

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Tony Marques