

FATHER EDWIN ADVENT MESSAGE 2023

Advent Greetings Parishioners and Visitors:

Advent is a special time of the year. It starts the Church's new calendar year. During Advent God wants to draw closer to you in your personal relationship with him. He wants to talk to you more, to help you make some changes. Advent is a gift from God and the Church. The word Advent is from Latin: "coming" or "arrival" especially of a king or "god." At Mass, the violet in the vestments, candles and banners is the colour of clothing royalty wore in Jesus' day. It was expensive. The colour symbolizes hope. Advent is a time of expectant, joyful hope as we await our coming king. We celebrate Jesus' first coming as a baby. Christ's coming into our hearts. Jesus said he would come back again the same way he left. His second coming will be at the hour of our death or the world's end whichever coming first.

Besides joy and hope, violet is a somewhat sad, serious colour. So, Advent is also a time for getting ready, preparing spiritually for Christ's coming. We celebrate and remember Jesus' first coming when God took on human flesh to become like us. The prophet Isaiah said the messiah would be called "Immanuel," the Hebrew word "God with us." Jesus lived, suffered, died, and rose again for us. He came to save us, heal us, free us from sin, the devil's power, worldly thinking, and death itself. Jesus said he will return to the world the same way he left.

Our response must be faith and hope in God. We believe he is in control of world history and will end it. He is in control of our own histories. We need to be watchful and ready. We don't know the day or the hour he'll return. We can't be found asleep, unaware, not ready like the five foolish virgins who didn't have enough oil for their lamps. When the bridegroom came, they were locked out of the wedding feast. We need more of the Holy Spirit, more of his gifts, the virtues, to live God centred lives as children of light.

How should we wait and get ready for Christ's coming? To be ready is walking in faith, hope, and love. As you prepare for Christ's return, seek a deeper love, thanking him for all he's done for you. We're created to love God and each other. We first love God by putting him first in our lives, to make our relationship with God stronger by spending more time in prayer, devotions, repenting, confessing our sins, devoutly receiving the Eucharist. We then show our love for others by producing good works of physical and spiritual acts of love, mercy, and care for others.

To be ready is to look forward to hearing Jesus say: "well-done, good and faithful servant, take the place God has prepared for you." Let's be ready so we can pray with joyful hope: "Come, Lord Jesus." One day we'll rise to enjoy the full presence of the Lord, the saints and loved ones who have gone before in our heavenly home. For now, let's enjoy Advent and Christmas. God bless you all and your families.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Edwin

