



## 1st Sunday of Advent

Advent is here – yes, believe it or not, the season of Advent has begun and the celebration of Christmas is not far away. We all know that this is a crazy busy season – going to the concerts, office parties and social gatherings. Then there is the shopping both on line and at the physical stores. Some of it we can avoid or curtail, and some of it we cannot. The important thing is that we just don't allow Advent to "happen" – that is, get caught up in everything and allow this important time to get away on us. Advent is a time to prepare the way of the Lord – i.e. to open our hearts in anticipation of the birth of Jesus Christ. We know he was born in history but he needs to be born anew in our hearts and so just as we celebrate our birthdays we need to celebrate Christ's birthday and prepare ourselves for this momentous occasion when God sent his only Son into the world.

Try to put together a simple plan so that Advent will be a period well spent preparing for Christ's birth. Some suggestions are the following:

- 1) Be faithful to Sunday Mass
- 2) Try to attend a Mass during the week
- 3) Perhaps buy the Advent candles for your home.
- 4) Receive the sacrament of Penance during this time – clearing the way for Christ to be received with open arms and heart
- 5) Read the daily Readings of Mass
- 6) Offer God some sacrifice – not so much for penitential purposes but so as to prepare the heart and soul of Jesus' birthday. There are so many creative examples that will be pleasing to God: charity in traffic, a little less TV, care with drinks, no sweets one night, spending a few extra minutes in pray each day and the list goes on. Just choose one and try to work on it.

Let us strive to cultivate this anticipation so that the Lord will find us ready, waiting and longing for his arrival.

I will be away this Sunday. The Missionary Sisters of Jesus of Nazareth have been in Powell River for 51 years. They have found it necessary to leave the Archdiocese and return to Malta. There is a big farewell to the Sisters and I will be there – thanking them for the service to the Lord and his Church – in the little corner of the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

Last Sunday at the 11:30am Mass I conducted an investiture of the boys who serve Mass. This went very well. This is an important service to the God and the parish. Please continue to pray for the boys and young men who serve the Lord in this capacity. As well – pray that more boys and young men would come forward to serve Mass.

Back to a plan or goals for the season of Advent: I came across this quotation and I thought I'd pass it along. I think it speaks well not only of Advent but of life – and specifically the spiritual life:

In the absence of clearly-defined goals, we become strangely loyal to performing daily trivia until ultimately we become enslaved by it."

-- Robert Heinlein, American Novelist

Let us accompany our Lady and St. Joseph along the way so that our hearts will be like something like the manger – awaiting Christ to be born in it.

*Fr. Hamilton*