



4th Sunday in Advent

We are now so close to the great day of joy – true and lasting joy – when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Truly this is joy to the world and the ultimate reason to be reminded that God loves us so much – beyond our comprehension – and wants the absolute best for us. We know too well that tragedy and evil happen in our world but Christ’s wood of the manger and the wood of the cross are his answer: love in the crib and sacrificial love on the cross. Let us strive – really strive – to give thanks, to tell God that we love him and are so grateful for the blessings that we have.

It is important to remember that Catholics are bound to attend Mass (although it really is the greatest of all privileges) on Christmas Day (December 25th) and the Solemnity of the Mother of God (January 1st). If you miss mass through your own fault (laziness, the claim to be too busy) then it is necessary to go to Confession before receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Please take note of the Christmas schedule in the bulletin. Monday the 24th is the last opportunity to receive the sacrament of Penance before Christmas. December 26th – Feast of St. Stephen (what most people call ‘boxing day’) ... Mass is at 9:00am.

Let us pray for the supernatural fruitfulness of the Catholics Come Home “campaign”. What is most important for all of us is that we strive to be saints, be charitable and truly kind with others. Don’t water down the Church’s teaching (this never helps anyone!) but be gentle and merciful. If Catholics do “come home” they are going to try coming to Church. What should they see? The priest celebrating reverently; the priest being properly prepared for Mass and his preaching; people should also see that fellow Catholics arrive at Mass on time (this is actually very important and it is a needed witness as to how important Mass is to us!); people should see all of us (yes – all of us) acting reverently throughout Mass. I know people read the bulletin before Mass (this is quite alright) but during Mass ... is this “fine”? I don’t even think I need to answer this question. Do we genuflect before going into the pews, make the sign of the cross reverently? These are a few things – but very important things – that Catholic who have not been to Mass will notice and either be edified by or turned off by.

My basic point is that all of us have a role to play in praying for those who are not going to Church to come back, try it again. But once they get here they should see all of us trying to take our faith seriously. How can people take the faith seriously when they see us (optics are important) ... what appears to be not taking it seriously. So please – let us all pray that we can do everything within our power to help those who may respond to these TV ads to come back and find a place where God is worshipped and loved.

During this season please, please --- do not drink and then drive. Take a taxi, have a designated driver or just don’t drink (we don’t need to, to have fun). Let us be happy, healthy and try to be holy.

United under the care of Our Lady and St. Joseph,

Fr. Hamilton