

# SAID ED December 1, 2013

## Advent Begins

Advent: A time of waiting, preparation and anticipation. This weekend we begin the first week of Advent. It is the beginning of the church's year and a reminder that God's time is not our time. The season opens with us hearing the cry of the prophets of old to beat our swords into plowshares and be makers of peace, not war. The message is no less urgent for us now, as it was when Isaiah first spoke those words.

Advent is a time for us to ponder that place in each of our hearts that only God can fill and to look forward with joyful hope for the coming of Christ. This means not only the coming of Christ the end of time, but the coming of Christ in each of our hearts anew everyday. Hopefully by now you have received the flyer we have sent out listing all the opportunities we have during this Advent season to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Lord. It's a time to be still and wait.

But who's got time for that? Christmas is a time of hustle and bustle and rush to get everything right for Christmas. This is partly a testimony to our desire to celebrate this important holiday, but it is also a reflection that the culture around us has **co-opted**. Consumerism drives so much of our holiday that we run the risk of it to being snatched away from us. Our culture encourages us to celebrate the significance of God's love unconditional care for us with dollar signs.

This year we are inviting everyone **to be counter-cultural**. In some way be a sign of contradiction! Carve out some time to be quiet, to settle down each day to allow that place that only God can fill in each of our hearts to become more evident. We need to make room to feel the emptiness that only God can fill.

So often we are tempted to fill that space in our lives with frantic activity, with food and drink, with substances that do not peak our awareness, but rather dull it and make us less human. This year our pastoral staff invites everyone in our parish to make room for God; to be still and treasure God's presence in our hearts. To help with this, wherever possible, we are canceling, all meetings that would take people away from their homes and their families. Our hope is that families would be able to spend a little time together enjoying each other and reminding each other of God's love.

We celebrate the Eucharist every day, perhaps you could come one more day during the week to help prepare your heart. The bulletin each week lists the appointed readings for everyday. These can provide a wonderful occasion to just sit and be still; allow the living Word of God to touch your heart. It is also the season in which there are many opportunities to serve one another and to do the ordinary things with renewed anticipation and awareness that Christ is present in our daily lives.

If we make the special effort as a parish family to make Advent a time of preparation and anticipation, we'll have the energy and the strength of our whole community behind our efforts and we will be brought closer to each other and the Lord during this wonderful season.

I wish you a happy Advent.

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