



From the  
**Pastor**



**ADVENT—**

**HE WAITS AS WE WAIT**

**T**he season of Advent is upon us. It is a special time. The word “Advent” is taken from the Latin word, *Adventus*, which means “arrival” or “coming.” Not the coming of Santa Clause—but Christ, the Savior. It is a time of waiting that recalls the **waiting** of the people of Israel for the Messiah. Today, we wait for the second coming of Christ. We know neither the day nor the hour of that event. The Advent season is also a time of **preparation**. The Lord should find us prepared when He comes, “. . . like the servant ready to open the door when the master returns.” A daily examination of conscience would greatly help us with this. In this season, we are also preparing to once again celebrate the first coming of Christ. Take some time as individuals and families to do something special every day for the Lord as your way of preparation.

The Advent Wreath is a central liturgical symbol of the Advent season. It integrates several elements that predate Christian faith. For ancient peoples, the wreath was a symbol of the life-giving rhythms of nature, and evergreen was a hopeful sign of life in the midst of winter. The candles on the wreath represents the sun’s life-giving light. Lighting one additional candle each week thus signifies the movement of the sun, increasing the daylight and the Son of God. The Advent Wreath reflects the circular, eternal nature of God’s love, even in harsh times, and the light of Christ that so permeates the night that “. . . the darkness could not overcome it.” The purple candles signify longing, expectation, and hope; while the pink candle represents joy.

As we wait for our Saviour, He is waiting for you to show your commitment to His Mission to evangelize and catechize by returning your Stewardship envelopes. In order to effectively evangelize and catechize, I asked your support to “Fund the Future and Fulfill the Past.” So far, we have only received about 170 of those Stewardship pledges out of the 1,675 letters we mailed out. This is only a 10% response. Things happen only when all of us are ready to make sacrifices. If we are to realize our mission and vision, we need a response from all of you—however large or small. It is not fair to ask the 10% of parishioners to do the work for the 100%. We still need \$200,000 to reach our goal of \$600,000 toward debt retirement this year. Remember: six households came up with \$300,000 and challenged the rest of the parish to match that before the end of 2017.

Making a pledge for five years can be scary for many. But that is a test of your faith and trust in God, Who considered you precious enough to send His Son to die on the cross. Do you consider supporting His Mission at St. Francis? When you make a pledge for five years, not knowing what is going to happen to you in the future, you are making a leap of faith. And the responsibility now falls on God, Who alone knows the future. Because of your trust, He will make sure that you will have enough resources to fulfill your pledge. Let your preparation this Advent season include becoming a better steward of God’s blessings.

—Father Jose Thomas