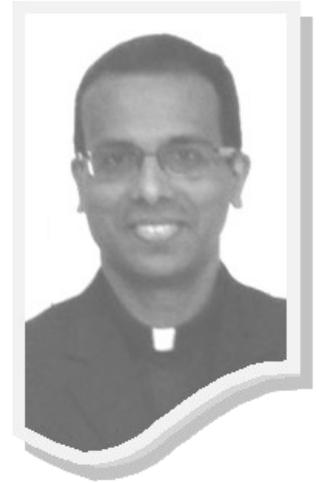




From the Pastor



Advent: He Waits as We Wait

The 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, which 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 season of Advent is also a time of **preparation**. The Lord should find us prepared when He comes, “Like the servant ready to open the door then 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 represent 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 some of 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 for “Blessings Given . . . Blessings Received,”—our Stewardship Campaign for the operating expenses of 2019. So far, we have received about 160 of those stewardship pledges out of the 1,717 letters we mailed out. Things happen only when all of us are ready to make sacrifices. I would appreciate it if you would return your commitment cards even if at this time you plan to make no changes to your giving. If you have not received the Stewardship packet in the mail, we have them in the pews and in the back of both churches. I would also appreciate those of you who can support our efforts to retire the debt. Please honor your pledges you made last year toward the debt retirement. If we are to realize our mission and vision, we need a response from all of you—however large or small. Let your preparation this Advent season include becoming better stewards who are willing to commit and make sacrifices.

—Fr. Jose Thomas



Blessings given . . . Blessings received

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Stewardship Letters mailed: 1,717
Received as of 11/30/2018: 176

Please remember:

- ◆ Place it in the collection basket when you attend Mass.
- ◆ Drop it off at the Church Office at the 27th Street Church.
- ◆ Mail in the provided envelope.
- ◆ Use online giving. Just go to the Parish Website at: stfrancisbend.org and scroll down toward the bottom, and click the “Online Giving” link. Please call the Stewardship Office if you have any questions or concerns at (541) 382-3631, Ext. 106.

