



From the
Pastor



ADVENT:

THE JESSE TREE AND THE “O ANTIPHONS”

The Jesse Tree celebrates the history of God’s loving action in our world, leading up to the birth of Christ. This striking symbol is based on the prophecy of Isaiah: “A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.” The Jesse Tree bears symbols of the most significant manifestations of God’s saving power down through history. Dozens of the key events of Hebrew salvation history are represented, including Noah’s Ark, the Burning Bush, the Ten Commandments, Jacob’s Ladder, Joseph’s Coat and the Key of David.

The seven “O Antiphons” are part of the Divine Office, the official daily prayer of the Church. They have been traditionally sung during evening prayer on the seven days before Christmas Eve. Each antiphon begins with the letter “O” followed by one of the biblical names for Christ: “O Wisdom,” “O Lord,” “O Root of Jesse,” “O Key of David,” “O Orient,” “O King of the Gentiles,” and “O Emmanuel.” These beautiful prayers provide the lyrics for the most famous of all Advent hymns: “O come, O come, Emmanuel.”

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. It is a season of giving. Many places have a “giving tree,” where people can find lists of things that they could bring to be given away. At our parish, we have the Christmas Food Baskets. We are still looking for food items or cash donations toward this program. A list of things needed is on page 5 of this parish bulletin. We also need lots of volunteers to pack and to deliver.

This is also the time of annual giving. I know that some of you give your one-time donations to the Church at this time of the year. If you are considering any type of year-end financial contributions to St. Francis Church, I humbly request that you assign those donations to debt retirement, clearly specifying it on the memo line of the check. We are only about \$130,000 short of our goal for 2017. I would also suggest that you make your Christmas Mass tithing this year toward debt retirement—”Fulfilling the Past.” One hundred percent of your donation to debt retirement goes toward it. Thank you for your generosity during this season of giving.

We will celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Tuesday, the 12th. *Mananitas* will be at 5 a.m. at the 27th Street Church. Then the procession will begin at 3 p.m. from Pilot Butte, and the Mass will be at 5 p.m., followed by festivities. All are invited to take part in the celebrations to honor the Patroness of the Americas.

—Father Jose Thomas