

Dear Parishioners,

Blessings of peace and joy to you and your family.

Welcome to the holy season of Advent. God has begun another holy year with us; and once again, let's travel hand in hand with each parishioner through the new liturgical year. Remember that this Advent season is the start of the liturgical Year A (Cycle A). You know that there are three liturgical years or cycles. We just ended the Year C, during which our Sunday liturgy focused primarily on the Gospel of Luke.

In Year A, the church offers us the opportunity to reflect on Matthew's gospel broaden our insights and appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ. All four Advent gospels will open to us the treasures of God's eschatological fulfillment that waits us. This first Sunday urges us to be expectant and prepared for the dawning of God's inbreaking into our individual lives and human history. The second and third Sundays will present to us the strong figure of John the Baptist. To us here in St. John the Baptist Church and St. Isidore Church, he is our man. He is our mentor. He is our guiding star. I pray that his strong voice and words will be heard daily by all of us and walk to the savior he leads us to discover each day. As the fourth Sunday dawns, we will be at the threshold of Christmas. We shall say something about Christmas when we near the moment. But for now, we listen to the echoing voice of John the Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand."

Have you been thinking of making any resolutions at the end of the year? Do you have any areas in your life you intend to resolve to change or improve? Why not do it now? Does the Church's year mean anything to you? It's almost a puzzle to me when I consider how I hinge my life upon the secular calendar and make resolutions around 12/31 each year to improve in some areas of my life. The intention to prune and refine my life through resolutions never materialize to my expectation. It seems to me upon further reflection that spiritual year might be more practical and relevant moment to make resolutions than the secular year. Hence, I have decided to adopt the church's year for my resolutions to seek improvement in my life journey. You might want to consider that also. For grace comes to us during holy moments than secular times. Hence, the beginning of the Church's year can be your grace-filled moment to resolve to step out into life with the confidence that comes from God and supported by the channels made available to us by the Church. If we attach a more careful consideration to the Church's calendar year and pitch our activities around it accordingly, who knows what the grace of God will furnish us with?

I also encourage you to make time for the few spiritual and holy activities lined up for us during the Advent season: communal reconciliation, an hour exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with Rosary or Evening Prayer and Benediction could provide enriching moments of preparation for Christmas. Decide to make time for these activities and you will find the time for them. Check the bulletin and website for programs.

Advent is here. A new liturgical year has dawn on us. Let's celebrate God's wonderful love for us each year.

Fr. Andrew

