

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

HAPPY NEW LITURGICAL YEAR!!!!



The liturgical life of the Church revolves around the liturgical calendar. Through the liturgical calendar, each recurring year we are drawn into the life of Christ from Conception to Ascension, and the life of the Church from Pentecost to Parousia. We also commemorate the saints because we are one communion in Christ. Finally, we celebrate the dedication anniversaries of our churches to thank God for the communities that he has drawn us into.

Broadly speaking, the liturgical calendar hinges on two major celebrations — Christmas and Easter. From these, we derive the reparatory seasons of Advent and Lent. The rest of the days are marked out as Ordinary Time.

The liturgical year begins with Advent, giving us five weeks to prepare for Christmas. At Mass, the Gloria is usually omitted. We progressively light the Advent wreath to express our anticipation for the Lord's coming. The catechism of the Catholic Church helps us understand that, When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming. — CCC 524

From this perspective, I would like to invite you to reflect upon three questions during this time of Advent:

- What has the Lord revealed to you about Faith this year? How do you think this will help you prepare your heart for Jesus this Christmas?
- What has the Lord revealed to you about Love this year? How do you think this will help you prepare your heart for Jesus this Christmas?
- What has the Lord revealed to you about Hope this year? How do you think this will help you prepare your heart for Jesus this Christmas?

An unexpected guest never shows up when you're prepared. Never does a sudden knock at the door or text message reading "stopping by, ok?"

The presence of an unexpected guest makes you see your abode differently. You wonder what judgments they might (justifiably) be making. Even after you conduct the usual business of apologizing for the mess and they reply with the customary nonchalance ("oh, don't worry about it"), you can't help but wonder what the place looks like to them. And what it says in turn about you. Not what you like to tell yourself about yourself, but what it really says about the reality you live in. Because it can become all too easy to live with our own messes and get used to ignoring the clutter we create. It requires the introduction of another to prompt real self-evaluation. (Hence, we confess our sins to a priest, who stands in the person of Christ, in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Doing so helps us see ourselves as we really are.)

When Christ comes to share His life with us liturgically at Christmas, and sacramentally in the Eucharist every day, He does not expect to find things in perfect order already, as if we were capable of cleaning up the mess on our own. My dear brothers and sisters in Christ let us not give in to the pressures of this world and not equate love with money spent. During this time, let us really focus on Christ so that He can be our Welcome Guest by placing our faith, hope, and love in Him.

***Very Rev. Fr. Lucien Eugene Pierre Ph.D., Pastor, VF
– December 1, 2024***