

December 1, 2020



Dear Parishioners,

Here we are with the First Sunday in Advent behind us and our county just moved into the Purple zone with the strictest restrictions. Perhaps, we sometimes experience just a bit of the frustration that the Jewish people felt in the midst of a much worse situation as they cried out to God: "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down!" (Isaiah 63. 19b) We might be tempted to feel abandoned by God with unemployment persisting and way too many families facing hunger and the possibility of eviction. And yet, as we look ahead to Christmas, we realize that God HAS come down to us and that divine presence is named Jesus. We are not abandoned! God has come to be with us through Mary's yes, the great mystery we call the Incarnation. God has taken on our human flesh in Jesus, our very existence with all its confusion, beauty, ugliness, and grandeur. Later in this same reading, he declares, "O Lord, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands."

This Sunday, we hear again from Isaiah, announcing the coming of a redeemer, "like a shepherd he feeds his flock; gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care." Our responsorial, Psalm 85 declares "Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from Heaven." The coming of John the Baptist is proclaimed in Mark's gospel and we hear his announcement, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

So how do we do that in these most unusual times? A few suggestions: If you find journaling helpful, write down some memories of when you experienced the presence of God in your life. If a younger person asked you what Christmas REALLY means to you, how would you respond? As you consider a present for someone who is not suffering financial hardship, think about making a donation in that person's name to a group whose mission he or she supports: e.g. Second Harvest Food Bank, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, Children's Defense Fund, the Red Cross or one of the groups locating parents of children separated at the border.

Take some time each day for a few minutes of quiet to thank God for what you have and what you can do. What is coming to birth inside of you during this nine month period of gestation? The Advent readings are some of the most powerful of the Church's year. You can find them at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org), the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; just click on the appropriate date on the calendar which appears.

May the Spirit grant us the time and the quiet to let them sink in! Peace to you and yours!

Sr. SHERAL