



PASTORAL LETTER

My dear Little Flower,

Advent is here! It is one of my favorite times of the year. The Church celebrates Advent because we are an expectant, hopeful, and joy-filled people! The season looks forward to the Coming of the Lord. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us: “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour’s first coming (His Birth), the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming” (524). As we journey and renew our desire to be with the Lord, together we unite our voices to John the Baptist’s confession of faith: “He must increase, but I must decrease”.

We have a lot in store for every Advent Season. I would like to personally invite you to some of them. First, come home and participate in the reading of Holy Scriptures and singing of carols with our Religious Faith Formation families: “Christmas is Calling You Home” (December 17 at 4PM). This initiative, alongside with the Music Ministry and Religious and Family Ministry of our parish, is dear and close to my heart. The prayerful celebration around our parish Live-Nativity hopes to bring us back home to our childhood memories of Christmas. Second, I would like to invite all families to come with great expectation of Christmas at our Crafts and Cocoa this year (December 9), we begin with Mass at 5PM; then, we move outside to light our parish Christmas Tree and sing a couple of Christmas carols, and then move to the Lower Level of the Church for Crafts and Cocoa.

Many of us are suffering, some secretly, especially during the holidays. All the more, we have to journey together. For those who are blue this holiday season, we would like to invite you to our Blue Christmas Prayer Service (December 10 @ 3PM). We owe it to ourselves to be in quiet prayer to our God, and be with Him who knows and identifies with your suffering and hurt during this season. Another community prayer opportunity is on December 15 @ 7PM, where we can have a quiet time of scripture reading and singing at our Taize Prayer Service.

Lastly, I would like to invite families to receive and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at our Advent Penance Service (December 18); confession is a great way to celebrate the Advent season, where we have the opportunity to “stay awake, and keep watch”, as we prepare our hearts for the Lord’s coming.

Week One of the Advent Season usually focuses on the theological virtue of Hope. By the grace of God we place our trust in God’s promise of salvation in Christ - while we hopefully anticipate and joyfully prepare our hearts for the Coming of the Lord on Christmas!

Your parish priest,
Fr JC Merino

