

SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS | By Archbishop Rozanski

Taking a journey means preparation for an unknown future.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The readings this week are filled with the image of a journey. There are three journeys that I'd like to focus on. First is the journey of Advent.

The Church makes the journey of Advent as a collective and external sign that invites each of us to make an individual and internal journey. How's that individual journey going?

Every external journey requires preparation.

The same is true for the spiritual journey that each of us is invited to make during Advent. What spiritual preparations are you making to make room for Christ in your life? Is there something in your heart, attitude, mind or schedule that could change to make more room for Christ?

I encourage you to take up some deliberate preparations during Advent, just as you would for any journey.

Second is the journey of Mary.

This week on Dec. 8, we celebrate the fact that Mary was conceived without original sin (the Immaculate Conception). But the fact that Mary was conceived without original sin, and lived her entire life without sin, doesn't mean that everything was easy for her! She wasn't omniscient, and no Church tradition or doctrine declares her clairvoyant. She had to walk into the future, as we all do.

Let's think, for a moment, about how we walk into the future. I think we all have the experience of looking back on things we did during a journey and thinking: "Anxiety about the future made me act badly. Knowing how things turned out, I wish I had done that differently."

We see that same pattern in the way the apostles act all through the Gospels — knowing how things turn out, they would have acted differently! And if we look back even further, we can see that same pattern throughout all of salvation history.

That's where, I suspect, Mary was different. In the face of uncertainty and anxiety, being without sin, she would have been able to move forward with trust in God's plan. That would have given her a certain kind of gentleness and patience in the face of the future that we could all use.

And that leads me to the third and last journey: All Things New.

As with Advent, so with All Things New: The collective and external journey of the Church is also an invitation to make an individual and interior journey. How's that interior journey going? We're putting the structures of the archdiocese under closer inspection and considering some changes. Are you going through the same process with your own life? It might be fruitful to do so.

And, as with Mary, so with All Things New: There is uncertainty as we move into the future. We can face that uncertainty with fear, or we can face it with gentleness and patience that's rooted in the promise the Lord holds out to us: "Behold, I am with you always." Asking Mary to help us grow in trust in the face of uncertainty and anxiety would be a great way to spend Advent.



**ADVENT BY TAILGATE**  
A REGIONAL EVENT FOR MEN

FOOD PROVIDED  
BYOB, DRINKS, & CHAIR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11  
OUR LADY OF SORROWS  
5020 RHODES AVE  
6PM

Cost: donation appreciated

## FR. JOHN'S DIGITAL QUILL FOR SPIRITUAL MUSINGS AND PARISH NEWS

### *Confessions and Confessional*

Thank you for the many positive comments on the decision to move the confessional from the choir area to the opposite side of the church. We made this decision so people have more privacy as they receive the sacrament.

As we continue our Advent journey in preparation for Christmas, we have a couple of special opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These special times are:

- December 10, 2:00-4:20pm
- December 21, 6:00-8:00pm or until all confessions are heard

These two special opportunities are in addition to the regular confession times of Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 6:45-6:55am and 3:45-4:20pm on Saturday.

### *Advent Prayer Groups/ARRR*

Our Advent Prayer Groups will continue this week on Sunday at 6:00pm, Monday at 2:00pm, and Tuesday at 9:30am. Even if you have not attended a prayer group either of the first two weeks, it is not too late to do so! These meetings truly do stand alone. They are great prayerful times just to pause in personal prayer and to share more deeply what is on our hearts with one another.

How is ARRR going? Have you taken some time to practice it? Here is a little reminder of what ARRR is and how to pray it:

- Acknowledge your feelings, thoughts, and desires. Without analyzing, critiquing, judging, or filtering, simply notice what is happening in your heart.
- Relate them to Jesus as to a friend, as to your Savior. Honestly entrust everything to Jesus, knowing that he is present, that he listens, that he sees, that he cares and takes interest in you.
- Receive from Jesus his response of grace, assurance, and truth. Allow God to open your heart to receive his love and life. Thoughts, feelings, and desires that draw you toward God ARE God pouring his love, life, and grace into you.
- Respond to his loving action with your love, thanks, and praise. Gratitude is the heart's natural response to God's love. A response flowing from the experience of God's love is accompanied by

joy and is immensely fruitful.

(From:<http://www.stgerald.org/doc/DailyPrayerCard.pdf>)

### *In Gratitude*

Thank you to Ms. Franks and Mrs. Hayes and to Ray and Mary Anne Braun for the wonderful celebration of First Confessions on Wednesday, November 30. It was truly a prayerful time where the Lord's mercy was palpable in the lives of our young people.

Thank you to our Home and School Association for the Cookie Kits to celebrate Christmas that is coming soon.

Thank you to Anne Browning and our Ladies' Club for Advent by Candlelight this past Sunday. What a prayerful way to pause this Advent and to reflect on Jesus...thank you!

Thank you to Erin Roth and our social media team and to our Development Committee for their fine work in the #IGiveCatholic Day on Giving Tuesday. We raised \$1,020 to provide some security updates to our school. Thank you for your hard work and for your generosity!

Thank you to our 8th graders, their parents, and the many people who are supporting the 8th grade graduation activities. They recently sponsored Photos with Santa, Chipotle night, and Mouse Races. Thank you for all you are doing to make the graduation for the Class of 2023 special.

Thank you to our seminarians Joe Martin and Ryan Martire for the Christmas Collection talks they are giving this weekend and for all they have done for us this first semester.

I will see you online or in Church! - Fr. John #SRAstrong