

BULLETIN -- NOVEMBER 29

Advent -- the Arrival of Christ! Situated at the very beginning of a New Year in the Church's reckoning, Advent is a time to sharpen our longing for Christ. God's people longed for the arrival of the Messiah in history, and it happened in Christ's Incarnation and earthly life. We long for the arrival of Christ in our own lives, and he comes to us on a daily basis (if we let him!) in Word and Sacrament. The world longs for its fulfillment when Christ comes again at the end of the ages; and he is anxious for us to live in such a way that, with the help of God's grace, we make ourselves and the world ready for that final arrival at any moment. One way to do that is to "turn from sin and believe in the gospel," as the liturgy of Ash Wednesday prompts us. We have that opportunity as a parish this coming **Saturday, December 5, at 10 a.m.**, when a number of priests will be on hand for our **Parish Advent Penance Service**. The service itself will be very brief. We want to give everyone the opportunity, at the *beginning* of Advent, to go to confession to be in the spirit of the season. Come, join us. Bring the whole family. Better yet, bring the whole neighborhood! Other opportunities even before that are at St. Dominic's in Wyoming this Sunday (today), November 29, at 3 p.m.; and at St. Andrew's Cathedral on Thursday, December 3, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., when you may join students from Catholic Central for confession. There will be more opportunities throughout Advent, and throughout this Jubilee Year of Mercy, but don't wait! Advent means waiting *on*, not waiting *around*.

Another anniversary. . . I am still writing thank-you notes to the many who participated in my 40th anniversary celebration, and probably will be writing them at least until my 42nd or so. But I am reminded that it was at this time four years ago, after another bout with my annual laryngitis, that something different happened. The laryngitis went away (I knew how *that* felt), but I still couldn't talk (and there was a new and unfamiliar feeling). It was examined by my physician, then by two local ENT doctors. I had an MRI to make sure there were no abnormalities in the brain. As anyone who knows me suspected, NOTHING was found. (Ha, I said it first!) The doctors finally referred me to Dr. Bastian at his clinic in Downers Grove, IL. He was thoroughly familiar with the problem, called *adductory spasmodic dysphonia*. He explained it to me in great detail, for which I am very grateful. Botox shots could help, but there would have to be much experimentation to get the right dosage, which could change over time, with varying success, and might not work at all. Later on, at the direction of a superior (!), I signed up for six sessions of voice therapy at Mary Free Bed, only to find that it was not covered by insurance. I went through it and paid for it out of obedience, but taught the voice therapists more about adductory spasmodic dysphonia than they had ever known. At one point, I lay down on a table and spoke very clearly. "Oh my," they said, "when you do that, you don't even sound like you need therapy!" "Which is what I've been telling you for several sessions now," I replied, getting my wallet out to pay a major bundle for the session. They were well-intentioned and very friendly, but used to dealing with victims of stroke or accidents. And so here we are, four years later.

One of the biggest trials for me was that I was very much looking forward to the introduction of the new texts of the liturgy, which took place four years ago. I had long been exasperated with some of the inaccurate and pedestrian translations, and looked

forward to giving voice to the more literary but more complex phrasings and words. Well, you've been hearing it for four years now, and it still sounds like mush. Some have said that the new microphone works better. Perhaps. Maybe now it sounds like oatmeal. You have all been very patient with this affliction, and I gratefully applaud you for that. Some have simply had to find other places to go to church, and I completely understand that. Word has gotten around much of the community by now, so I have to explain the problem less frequently than I did at first. My "Mr. Moose" voice can help me get through a tough spot now and then, but he doesn't seem to want to stick around for too long. All I can do is say thank you for your kindness, and for bearing with me this sliver of the cross of Christ.

Congratulations, parish scholars! The following parishioners (grade level in parentheses) find themselves on the First Quarter Honor Roll at West Catholic High School: Joshua Augdahl (10), Wyatt Davis (9), Michael Edozie (10), Holly Holtzclaw (10), Bridget Kohane (9), Joshua Kohane (10), Maria Kohane (12), Olivia Marzolf (9), Ciera Rodney (9), John Worm (12), and Joseph Worm (9). We are proud of you, and of ALL our students who work hard and do their very best.

Drop by the school library and see the dining room outfit, table, four chairs, china cabinet, and a full set of china and silverware. We're doing a silent auction on it. The whole set will go to the highest bidder through a system of sealed bids. Pick up an envelope and card from the table, and write your name, address, and phone number on it, along with your bid for the whole set. (Individual items will not be sold separately.) Mark "Bid" on the envelope and drop it through the mail slot on the front of the parish office / convent or through the milk chute on the back of the rectory. The bids will be opened in the library at 11 a.m. next Sunday, December 6 (St. Nicholas Day). Meanwhile, come in and look, take all the pictures you want, check out comparable deals on eBay or craigslist. A tithe of the purchase price will be given to the parish. It could be an ideal Christmas gift for someone in your family, or for newlyweds you might know. God bless you!

Our Latvian friends invite us to their Christmas Market Arts & Crafts and International Bake Sale on Sunday, December 6, from 11:30 a.m. till 3 p.m. The event will be held at the Latvian Hall at 504 Grand Avenue, N.E., 1 block north of Michigan Street. An interesting variety of Christmas gifts will be available for purchase, along with wonderful homemade baked goods. A delicious hot lunch will be served. Anyone wishing to have a table to sell arts and crafts items, please call Nell Barkans at 821-1797. Our participation is invited.

"I was in prison, and you came to visit." Well, perhaps that's not your particular call or gift as a member of the Body of Christ. (If it is, though, get busy!) Whatever the case, there are many ways to carry out the command of Christ outlined for his disciples in Matthew 25. Our Diocesan Prison/Jail Ministry invites our donations to the annual Christmas Drive. This year they are collecting **NEW (PACKAGED) white tube socks and NEW reading glasses with PLASTIC frames in +1.00 to +1.75 strengths**. Your donated items will be used at the various jails, shelters, and juvenile

detention centers within our diocese. We must have the donations in our box at the back of church by December 15 for inclusion in the inmates' Christmas packages. Thank you, and God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: Egotism is the anesthetic that dulls the pain of stupidity (Knute Rockne, 1888-1931, Notre Dame football coach).