

LITURGY BYTES

Happy New Year!

It might seem like I am rushing the season and heading to 2023. Fortunately, I am not. Even though, as we look around, we notice Christmas decorations, holiday sales no matter where we go. Some houses are even decorated outside already for Christmas.

This year as a Church we will go from Thanksgiving right into the season of Advent, for the Advent season begins Thanksgiving weekend. On Thanksgiving morning, we will see the fall colors of flowers and mums on the altar and then that weekend, the purple will adorn the Church and sanctuary reminding us of that great time of waiting. Advent also marks the beginning of our liturgical year and so the “happy new year” greeting above!

Advent is a sacred season for a two-fold preparation: first, we as the Church ready ourselves for the second coming of Christ; and secondly, the Church prepares for a festive celebration of the birth of Jesus. The words *ready, wait and anticipation* have always surrounded Advent. My question today is, what do we anticipate?



The readings of Advent paint a poetic image of the lived justice and peace that will flourish in the Kingdom of God at the end of time. While Advent is marked by silence, stillness, and contemplation, we should realize that action is also necessary and needed. We should be doing acts of justice and mercy. It seems easier at this time of the year because we are engaged in widespread giving and generosity to our sisters and brothers, especially those in need. First and foremost, we all need to get our spiritual homes in order. We do see Advent as a season of penance but not the same as the season of Lent. Penitential doesn't mean an absence of joy. Also, signs like darkness and light guide both Advent and Christmas. How will they touch us this year?

Have a safe, blessed, and healthy week ahead!!!~~Michele Hall