



HAPPY NEW YEAR

LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Every year as we begin the Advent season, I use the Happy New Year greeting because for the Church it is the beginning of a new year! We move into another cycle of Scripture readings, especially noted is the Gospel which will be from Luke this year.

Even though the world around us has been moving into Christmas since early October (just visit the stores and you will see what I mean), the Church in her wisdom tells us to take time to prepare the way for the Lord.

Unlike Lent, where we tend to fast or give up things, Advent is a time of anticipation as well as preparation. Perhaps, joining with our Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph recalling their journey awaiting the birth of Our Lord is something on which we could reflect. How did they prepare? At this time of the year, I think about waiting especially when I am on a line waiting to check out. It is a good distraction to think, even for a few moments, on the waiting Mary and Joseph experienced and how they handled it. Waiting should also remind us of who we are waiting for and how prepared we are.

Another symbol that surrounds us is light. There are special displays all over Long Island with beautiful and spectacular lights. Many homes are decorated with lights, even before we celebrate Thanksgiving. Can we take this spectacular vision and be reminded of Christ, who is the Light of the World? Do we see these lights as a sign of renewal? Can we be a light for our world? Would this be the symbol to choose for your Advent this year?

May we all go forth whether in prayerful waiting or blessed lighting as we grow in our love for the birth, once again, of Our Lord Jesus.

Happy Advent!