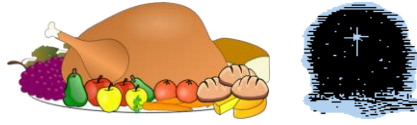


FROM THE VICAR'S DESK



Thanksgiving is behind us. Christmas is before us. Advent is upon us. Today, November 27, is the First Sunday of our new Liturgical Year. It's hard to believe that Christmas is barely four weeks away. There seems to be a 'world of things' to do before then. It feels so overwhelming. Yet, whether we are ready or not, like it or not, Christmas, with all its glorious wonders and all its inevitable tragedies, will come and Christmas will go. Whether we 'go with the flow' and enjoy it (for the most part!) or whether we are 'bowled over' and crushed by it (for the most part!) --it is up to us. You see, it all has to do with 'attitude.'

If we allow ourselves to get caught up in a spending frenzy, worrying about what 'others' will think, then all the glitter & sparkle will weigh us down and, come December 26th, when it's all over, we will not only be exhausted, but disgusted. If, on the other hand, we attempt to keep this Christmas (and its Advent Season) as a 'spiritual journey,' then, come December 26th, when its all over, we will not only be exhausted, BUT delighted. I don't mean that we will be jumping with joy, praising God from the rooftops. BUT, when it is all over, we will feel closer to God...for having, privately, reminded ourselves--all along--that it had been about Him... NOT about us or the house or anything else! Christmas is not only for children, making the time special for them. It is also about Him--and our gratitude for His deep love for us, dramatized in our Nativity scenes. You know the ones--in our churches and in our homes. With the right 'attitude,' Christmas is about our remembering, in spite of all the noise, all the traffic, and all the shouting-- that this season is about the love of God for every one of us. The new liturgical year has begun with our preparing (i.e., waiting) for His arrival. The prior liturgical year ended (merely 1 week ago), when we acknowledged Him as Christ the King...of all time & space. In between the two...when we meet Him at His birth and we meet Him at our death--the end of time as we know it, between these 2 events... is our time ...to learn, live, & love Jesus and to share His truth in the here & now. It is our time!

We rightly celebrate Christmas, for without it, there would be no Easter...no hope. But, alas, we do have Christmas, Easter, and ...Hope eternal!

Sincerely and in Him, born in a manger,--Fr. T.