

## From the Pastor's Office

### *First Sunday of Advent*

On your marks! Get set! Go! Here we go again. It seems like only yesterday we were doing this. We have been doing Advent for so long that now we go on automatic pilot. The first thing we will do is complain about Christmas. We will say that Christmas has become so commercial. We will wonder where Jesus is in all of this. We will go to the attic to get the decorations. O, sorry, they are up already in my house. We get ready for Christmas in our house in August. We will trundle all the way to Christmas complaining about everything. Yet, we love it. I think the reason we love Advent and Christmas so much is because so much of our year is routine and ordinary. We like it when there is a bit of spice to life. We like a bit of excitement. The pulse races. The heart beats a little bit faster. I guess I am not dead yet. Properly Advent is meant to be a time of reflection and preparation. The problem is that most people think I am talking about Santa instead of the Baby Jesus. We are invited to enter into a solemn season of preparation. We are to have somber thoughts about life and where we are all headed. That somber theme is sprinkled through the readings today. We are all a work in progress being molded into the image and likeness of God. Unfortunately, retail America knows this truth as well. We are like putty in their hands. Give us a few Jingle Bells, a bit of snow, a few twinkling lights and we are sold. We will buy anything they have to offer. We will jam the highways looking for that elusive parking spot. We will stand in line for hours waiting to get our hands on the pearl of great price. If I could just get my hands on this one thing I will be happy forever. That is the myth. I will chase it every day of my life. Meanwhile I stop living in the present. Time passes and I don't even know it. I put my whole life on hold. Jesus warns us, "Be watchful! Be Alert! You do not know when the time will come." What about that then? I spend this season waiting in line for my next techno gadget paying no attention to my family or my life. Our Mother the Church invites us to pause. Can we consider the bigger picture? This is the season when we prepare ourselves spiritually for the coming of the Messiah to Bethlehem. There are other choices we can make.



With love,  
Fr. Pat