

Dear Sacred Heart Parishioners,

Right now, the Parish House is in an in-between state. All of the autumn decorations, including Halloween and Thanksgiving, have been taken down and put away. At this point, however, it's not beginning to look a lot like Christmas around here. Maybe it's the same in your home – an in-between time. Perhaps, some perspective, the in-between time between Isaiah and his wonderful prophecies, including: "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests." and the birth of Jesus was about 700 years. The in-between time between the birth of Jesus and the appearance of John the Baptist: "A voice of one crying out in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths" was about 28-30 years. The in-between time between the Second Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day 2021 is about 21 days. How do we prepare in this very brief in-between time? Is there enough time to do all that we would like to do? Probably not. Is there enough time to do all that we need to do? Hopefully, yes.

This week, two very beautiful feasts in honor of Mary are celebrated, the Immaculate Conception (the 8<sup>th</sup>) and Our Lady of Guadalupe (the 12<sup>th</sup> – the Third Sunday of Advent this year). The Gospel readings for those feasts are the first and second Joyful Mysteries of the Holy Rosary – the Annunciation and the Visitation. How did Mary spend here in-between time? She pondered. She prayed. She spent beautiful time with her relative, Elizabeth whose child, John, leaped in the womb being so close to Mary's child, Jesus, the promised Messiah. Surely, like Mary, we can find the time to pray, to ponder, to rejoice in God our savior and proclaim the greatness of God. As autumn leads to winter, and Advent to Christmas, may this in-between time lead us not to stress, anxiety or worry but to comfort and joy because Jesus is coming to visit us and will remain forever.

"Then cleansed be every soul from sin; Make straight the way of God within  
Prepare we in our hearts a home, where such a mighty guest may come."

Let us make straight His paths,

*Father John*