



November 29, 2009
1st Sunday of Advent

Dear Friends,

Can we have a spiritual Advent?

Around us many people are in the buying-and-selling mode, are lining up parties, rushing around and worrying. For some, it is the most stressful period of the entire year. People worry about what kind of decorations they put up. Some worry about gift giving-receiving. Others worry about who is invited or not invited to a gathering. Isn't it rather ironic that we can bear so much fear or guilt over the birth of Jesus who came to take away our fear and guilt?

Our Church offers us some simple ways to approach this season which may help us.

Consider **quiet, darkness, fasting, and waiting.**

QUIET – as opposed to noise. Let's try turning off the TV, the Ipods, etc. for fifteen minutes as a family while together we read a Bible passage, silently think about it, and then talk/listen with each other about what we heard in the passage.

DARKNESS- December is the darkest month of the year. The darkness can remind us of the world without Jesus. Turn off the lights, light candles and make an advent wreath. Have your evening meals in candle light as a reminder of our call to be a light in the darkness. Your family may like the "low glow."

FASTING – encourage each other to fast from something we really think we cannot get along without. It may be food, but it may be something else with which we are 'stuffing' ourselves. By fasting from one thing, we may get in touch with a spiritual hunger that only Jesus can fill. Shall we tell each other in the family what we will be fasting from this Advent? We can support each others choice if we ask for that support. Let's ask, let's share.

WAITING - as opposed to rushing around. Turn the "rushing moments" into gifts for those around you. Start a cheerful conversation with some waiting next to you in line, offer to help someone struggling with packages, say a quiet prayer for people in the cars around you, let someone go ahead of you in line when you have several items and the other only has one or two items.

Let us remember that the Lord we are waiting for is already present in the people we are waiting with. Let us be the ones who make these Advent days more peaceful and more loving.

During Advent, nearly every day the first reading is from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah describes the savior who is to come. The Virgin Mary also holds a special place in the weekday readings, with two major feastsdays highlighted: the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas.

Let us use one or two of the rich Advent symbols and rituals that the Church offers us during these next four weeks. Along with the Scriptures, they will help us keep our focus on the real reason for this season ... Jesus. Blessed Advent!

In Jesus and Mary,

Sister Barbara