

Fr. Gerard's column 11/27/22

“Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”

Jesus doesn't tell us when he will come again; but he does tell us all we need to know. First, he leaves no doubt in our minds that he will in fact return—this isn't a question we have to debate. And secondly, he tells us what we need to do to be ready: stay awake! As long as we don't doze off while we're waiting, everything will be all right.

So, our task is a relatively simple one. We are called to be on the lookout. We are supposed to be ready for the Lord when he appears. This is a straightforward instruction to be sure. But it does contain an inherent challenge: it's often much easier to hit the snooze button than to get up and at 'em. It's our task, however, to make sure we don't give in to the temptation to fall back asleep.

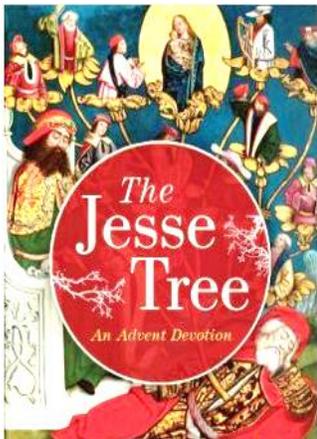
This is what the season of Advent helps us to do. It's like the Church's alarm clock, ringing with persistence in our ears: Wake up! Throw off the covers of apathy and distraction! Jesus is coming! Get up and get your house in order before he arrives!

What exactly this means will be different for all of us—the behaviors we need to change, the specific virtues we need to develop—all of this is unique to everyone. But our common goal is the same—to clean house in our hearts and make ourselves ready to welcome the Lord. Yes, his return at the end of time will be a momentous event, but even if we never experience it during our lifetime, Jesus still wants to come to us here and now, to dwell in our hearts through the presence of his Spirit. This Advent let's be ready to welcome the Lord every minute of every day.

GRATITUDE AND THANKS – On this Thanksgiving weekend, I want to thank all who engaged in giving so that others may be blessed. Special recognition to the CYO swim teams for their food drive efforts. I also thank Sister Carol and Ann Hedges and all the volunteers of Parish Social Ministry for coordinating and disbursing all of the food donations to those in need.

THANKSGIVING MASS –Thanks to John Buckel and all the members of our music ministry who led us in a festive and prayerful beginning to our national holiday. Once again, the offertory collection at the Thanksgiving Day Mass is being given to an organization called *The Friar Suppliers* benefitting their mission in Haiti. Your generosity assists them in their mission to create, build, and improve the living conditions of those in desperate need. Their presence also brings hope through evangelization programs. If you still wish to support this collection, please contact Sharon in the rectory office. More information on this mission can be found at www.friarsuppliers.org

ADVENT WREATH - We enter the season of Advent this weekend and therefore begin our faithful preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth. This year we will continue the tradition of inviting families and individuals to sign up for the lighting of our Advent Wreath at Masses. The sign-up book can be found on the altar rail in front of the Saint Joseph statue.



AN ADVENT DEVOTION - During the season of Advent, the Family Mass will be reflecting on the theme, *“God has a plan, and you are a part of it”* The Jesse tree is Jesus's family tree, revealing that God's plan was unfolding over time. We are inviting families to order the book *“The Jesse Tree an Advent Devotion”* so that they can take time each day of Advent to reflect on the season and our journey to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Each Sunday during the Family Mass homily the children will present the various Jesse Tree ornaments of the week to come. Families using the book will have the opportunity to do the daily devotion connected to each ornament of the tree. The parish will be ordering the book in bulk allowing our families to purchase it at \$10.00 which is 50% of the publisher's price. If you wish to order the book at the discounted price, please email religioused@srolchurch.org. Families can order the ornaments as well directly from Sophia Institute or make their own. The book is also available as a downloadable e-reader. <https://tinyurl.com/SROLJesseTree>.

ADVENT EVENTS – In each week's bulletin you will find various events for Advent. I hope that you will find a variety of ways in which you might be engaged with the unique spirit that is Advent. I look forward to seeing you throughout this holy season of patient expectation.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.