

How has your Advent gone thus far? As we reach the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – whether it's been a fruitful season or not, there are still a few days left for preparation before the glorious feasts commence. Mary and Joseph are still on their way to Bethlehem. They aren't the only ones, either, as a number of others travel there for the census, too. The Son of God is going to be in their midst, but they will be too caught up in their own lives to notice, and he will actually be relegated to the home of animals. Thankfully the love of his mother and foster father are great.

There are hopefully many good things in your life these days, though I know it can be a challenging time of year for many as well. Whatever your joys or sorrows, be sure to find yourself in Bethlehem in a few days time, and not in the midst of the hustle and bustle of so many others, but in the lowly manger. Don't miss out on the greatest thing, your Savior and Lord who has descended from Heaven, and who wants to be with you.

**Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, *[here mention your request]* through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.**



While our weekly bulletin usually focuses on the week, this week's bulletin has information for the next two weeks, as our Christmas/Holy Family bulletin will be a special edition that focuses on encountering Jesus Christ. That is what the Child of Bethlehem is all about, after all. My prayer for you this coming Christmastide is a deeper encounter of God with us. May Christmas find you there with him, and still there the next day, and the days after that as well.

I'll be taking a couple of days off after Christmas for several celebrations with family and those like family. I will also be away for a few days the first week of January at a priest conference. Priests get one day off a week, and a month of vacation a year under Canon Law. I like to spread mine out, but it can be taken all at once. Fr. Randy will be heading home to the Philippines December 30<sup>th</sup>, and will be gone until the end of January. We have three different priests coming to help with the Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses throughout the month. I am grateful they are willing to come help provide the Eucharist and our regular Sunday worship. Be sure to keep Fr. Randy in your prayers during his time away, for rest and refreshment. And pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life, as well.