

# From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

December 15, 2024

Dear Friends,

“Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ’s first coming to us is remembered, as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.”

*Roman Missal*

The beginning weeks of Advent draw our attention to Christ’s coming at the end of time. But from December 17-24 the scriptures and prayers are more specifically focused on the accounts of the birth of Christ in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Realistically, these are hectic days of last-minute preparation. One thing I hope you will include in your to-do list is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

On Tuesday, December 17, at 7 PM we will celebrate the Communal Form of the Sacrament of Reconciliation with individual confessions in the Main Church. The shared Liturgy of the Word will move us to a communal examination of conscience and a common penitential prayer of sorrow for sin. Individual confession follows that.

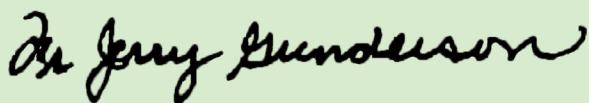
We live in a world that avoids, consumes, indulges, wastes, harms, doubts, objectifies, and even totally rejects the message of Jesus. In other words, we live in a sinful world. Free to choose, we sometimes make bad choices; that is, we sin in a personal way. How can we honestly deal with the reality of personal sin. Many of us wish there was an easier, softer way than confessing our sins to a priest, but it would lack the personal encounter and the words of absolution. It would not be the Sacrament that the Church has given us.

Dr Karl Menninger asked the question, “Whatever happened to sin? He notes that when we label sin as crimes, as disease, as bad habits, we are avoiding the fact that ultimately sin is a rejection of God’s love and God’s command, ‘Love one another as I have loved you’.”

“God, the Father of Mercy, through the death and resurrection of His Son, has reconciled the world to himself and has poured out the Holy Spirit on us for the forgiveness of sin. Through the ministry of the Church may you have pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sins, to overcome the power of Satan, and to reconcile us to God. The gospels tell of the joy felt by a woman who found the lost coin, the joy of the shepherd who found the lost sheep, and the joy of the father reunited with a lost son. That the joy of being reconciled with God.

“O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation, and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen”



Fr. Jerry Gunderson