



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 2017

Introduction to the Word:



It's a reality that "Company's Coming." Each week we are going to look at aspects or virtues we need to have in our life as we get ready for The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus! This Season can be overwhelming - like trying to get to the front of customer service counter on Black Friday - but we need to look even in the midst of it - at what really counts. Last week we talked about "Humility" which leads us to develop the virtue of "Hope". This week we talk about "Perspective" which leads us to develop the virtue of "Faith" as a primary characteristic in our life. Next week we shall discuss "Love" especially of Neighbour. As each candle is lite, and each virtue becomes clear, may this Advent help us to prepare for Company which is Coming!

Warm-up Activity: (5-10 minutes)

- What do the terms "perspective" and "faith" mean to you? (1st of Advent)
- How do you think they are related to "hope" and "humility"? (Christ the King)
- Do you think they relate to being a "consumer" or "contributor"? (Stewardship Sunday)
- Name one "Advent" goal you have for yourself and for your small group?

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

GOSPEL (Mark 13:33-37)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. "It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with a particular task, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. "And what I say to you, I say to all: Keep awake." The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

[Consider hearing again the Sunday Message as Small Group](#)



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Reflection:

Advent is a welcome time to prayerfully lament the frustrations that keep us from God. To look at the things we find difficult to keep on top of as week “Life at 360” and be aware of everything. Sooner or later though we realize we can’t and so we become frustrated (maybe even with God). But the readings direct us to acknowledge our pain, but they do not allow us to become fixated on it. Instead we are invited to turn our gaze toward living with a perspective that calls us to be as St Paul reminds us in First Corinthians “firm to the end.” (1 Cor. 1.1) Our waiting may be tedious and oftentimes discouraging, but living with this perspective leads us to develop the virtue of faith and focus on the “God stuff” and not only the pettiness at times which can divide us. We should not be disheartened because God is always there for us.

Questions for Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

- Who are the people whose presence matters to you, that you just like having them around? (don’t embarrass the people in your small group too much) ☺ What distractions do you face when trying to be present for people? What can you do to overcome these distractions?
- Do you know someone you can visit who would benefit from your visit? So often we write negative notes, letter or emails - could your group write them a note together?
- Last week you identified a hope (not wish) for this Christmas and someone who needs to hear the message of hope Christmas. How is your progress on that going?
- Father shared the story of someone in Hospice care who had a chance to “put things in order” before coming home to see the Master – is there anything you need to “put in order?”

Moving Forward in Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)

- How is your group going to make Advent special – consider the [Kindness Counts Campaign and Red Stocking](#) project now underway.

GROUP PRAYER COMMITMENT

- Offer a Holy Hour in Adoration for the intentions of our Parish and its Pastor.
- Pray the [Prayer of Humility](#) that was distributed in your daily prayers with the intention Where do you need to discern Perspective

Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray: [Hail Mary](#)

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