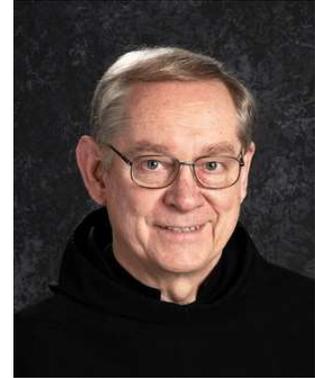


Sunday, December 2, 2018

Brothers and Sisters of Our Parish Family,

A recent news item claimed that 45% of adults surveyed would skip Christmas if they could. When I came across this figure, I thought it had to be a misprint. But after considering how so many people are in a frenzy this time of the year--decorating their homes in mid-November, Christmas music right after Halloween, gift shopping madness, with “Black Friday” two weeks before



Thanksgiving—it became clear. By the time December 25th arrives, they are tired of it and rush to put it all away for another year. It’s up to us—you and me--to change this madness that seems to grow worse every year.

For starters, let’s treat ourselves to savoring the *Advent* Season, a time of *joyfully awaiting* the celebration of Christ’s Birthday. **Advent is not the Christmas Season.**

A beautiful tradition for the home is the Advent wreath. When, at the main meal, each of the four weeks’ candles is lit, we recall that Christ, the long-anticipated Messiah, became the Light of the World at the moment of His Birth. So, although we anticipate the joy of the approaching Christmas Season, we do not yet enter fully into the celebration.

Next, during Advent it’s important to make the time to pray--for blessings upon family, friends, and one’s self; for all who are in need; for the sick, the dying, the less fortunate—and, last but not least, prayers of thanksgiving.

Then, if it’s been a while, there’s no time like the present to go to confession. For when we turn from sin and back to God, we become more like Him and can bring His Light to a world too often darkened by sin.

Finally, when Christmas does arrive, we will be able to celebrate the reason for the Season, **Jesus Christ**, the gift of God’s love for us in giving us His Son—the greatest of all gifts!

Putting these suggestions into practice, our own Advent and Christmas will be less stressful, more meaningful, and, a lot more joyful.

Peace and Blessings,

Father Conrad