

## Fr. Martin's Reflection – December 19, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend begins our 4<sup>th</sup> week of Advent. Next weekend we celebrate the birthday of Christ, and we also remind ourselves of Christ's coming – the second coming, but also Christ's desire to come into our lives in a very active way. Christ's desire is to be active in our lives as he was publicly active in the lives of the people of his day. Jesus was consciously aware of the many issues the people had to contend with.

**Societal issues:** The woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1-11), Mary choosing to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him teach while Martha was busy with work in the Kitchen (Lk 10:38-42), Someone doing God's work but are not part of our club (faith) and trying to stop them. Jesus states: "For whoever is not against us is for us." (Mk 9:38-40)

**Scriptural interpretation:** The disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." (Jn 9:2-3)

**Social isolation:** Jesus associates with lepers – they were to leave their homes and live on the outskirts of the town. They would have to scavenge for food. They were forbidden to have any contact with people and had to ring a bell and shout "unclean" if anyone approached. (Mt 8:1-4, Mk 1:40-45, Lk 5:12-16)

**Divine retribution:** – Is God out to get us? In Ezekiel 8:32 "For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord. Turn back and live." In Jn 9:10 Jesus states, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."

That was then, is now any different? Are we still battling social issues – are we still trying to find our place in society, or in our church? Am I still been looked down upon because I'm deemed to be 'different?' Are people still using the word of God as a stick to beat people with, or justify discrimination? Are we still pushing people away because they don't 'behave' the way we want them too, or because they have different views than I do? Do we promote ourselves to the position of God and send people to hell?

Let us allow Jesus to be born into our hearts so Jesus will be able to continue to walk this world and continue to be the advocate of the social outcasts and be a compassionate interpreter of scripture. Let Christ, through us, reach the socially isolated and a sharer of God's compassionate love. Let us be that process by taking time to make room in our hearts, let us go to the compassionate God and ask for his forgiveness, let us go to confession this Advent.

We celebrate the sacrament of confession/reconciliation before every vigil mass on Saturdays and we will have a special Christmas reconciliation service in St Mary Church, Bordentown, Tuesday, Dec 21 6:30pm – 7:30pm and in Holy Assumption Church, Roebling, Wednesday, Dec 22 6:30pm – 7:30pm. Come, make room in your heart for Christ this Christmas.

### ***MERRY CHRISTMAS AND MANY BLESSINGS FOR 2022***



*What a year, I mean what a brilliant year we had. Having our Religious Education students back in the classroom. Having them attend mass before attending class. Walking With Purpose running alongside the RE classes so to benefit our moms. The wonderful success of the Arise program and the wonderful liturgies celebrated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Torch. The wonderful people enrolled in our RCIA program who will join our Church at Easter.*

*How is all this happening? Good question: it is in no short measure to the generosity of a lot of people. I would like to thank all involved, especially the Liturgy Team, Knights of Columbus, RCIA coordinators, Margaret Zola, Carol Schulz and our RE teachers, classroom assistants, and hall monitors. Thank you to the facilitators and hosts of the Arise program, the coordinators of Walking With Purpose. To all our Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Musicians, Cantors and Alfonso, our Music Coordinator.*

*Thank you to the Ushers, collectors, and all involved in the liturgical and flower displays in both our Churches. To all our parish societies – St Vincent de Paul, Food Pantry, Holy Name Society, Legion of Mary, and the Altar Rosary Society. To our sacristans and all you who volunteer, thank you.*

*I am deeply indebted to our office staff, they do such wonderful work, their dedication and commitment is second to none – Thank You!*

*To our clergy, thank you for all the support you give to the people of our parish both sacramentally and spiritually. It is appreciated by one and all. Fr. Steve, and Fr. Martin (Number 1) thank you for all your help and support. To Fr. Anson and to our Deacons, you do such great work and give such great support, thank you!*

*May God bless you all this Christmas and throughout 2022.*

*Fr. Martin*