

Fr. Martin's Reflection – 12/05/21 Bulletin

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Welcome to the second week of Advent, our second week of closet cleaning our inner selves. As we stand looking into the wardrobe of our hearts what are we seeing? Are there garments from our childhood that are simply taking up space or is it more sinister than that? Are they space grabbers or heartache garments? What decisions do I need to make that will leave more space in my heart, and if I do make space what am I going to fill it with? Advent offers us the opportunity and space to answer those questions – so how do we take this opportunity and create this space?

First, we need to learn the language of **'Prayer.'** Prayer is not a magic formula that miraculously solves all problems. Prayer is another word for **'Friendship.'** Prayer is building friendship with God, allowing God to get to know you and allowing you to get to know God. The thing is, God has no problem letting you know who God is, but are we as willing to let God know who we are? Our concept of prayer is often a litany of Our Fathers and Hail Marys or other continuous verbal prayers. These prayers are beautiful and a wonderful way to begin a conversation with God and the Blessed Mother, but God also wishes to hear us speak from the heart and tell God how we are really doing. What is work like? What are our relationships like? What is happening at home? How are you doing, how you feeling, how is your heart? This is prayer, this is friendship, this is being in a relationship with someone who absolutely loves you!

Second, finding **'Earthly Disciples.'** Jesus relied on his disciples for solidarity, affirmation, friendship, assistance, and truth. If Jesus needed disciples, so do we! No matter where we find ourselves in the world or what work environment we are in or what challenges we are facing, we need the solidarity, affirmation, assistance, and the truth of our Christ-like disciples.

Third, we need **'Quiet Time.'** Throughout the scriptures we find time and time again the people God calls to be God's ambassadors in this world find it necessary to go to quiet places to pray. Jesus went to quiet places to pray (Lk 5:15-16, Mk 1:35-37). Jesus also instructed others about the importance of praying in quiet places, **"When you pray, go to your room and close the door. Pray privately to your Father who is with you. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you."** Mt 6:6-8. **"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, Jesus said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'"** Mk 6:31 NIV

Fourth, **'Reconciliation.'** Dear friends, we have this most beautiful treasure that we fail to recognize, given to us by Jesus, the gift of the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession. Jesus said to us, **'If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you.'** Mt 6:14. **"As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."** Ps 103:12. And James instructs us this way, **"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power."** James 5:16

We celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation/confession each Saturday at Holy Assumption from 3:00—3:45pm and St. Mary Church from 4:00—4:45pm and by appointment.

Christmas Confessions:

St. Mary Church, Bordentown - Tuesday, Dec 21 6:30 – 7:30pm

Holy Assumption Church, Roebling - Wednesday, Dec 22 6:30 – 7:30pm

Dear friends, as we journey through Advent, let us journey closer and closer to the Lord.

Fr. Martin