

**Homily**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - B**

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
November 28-29, 2020

Is 63: 16-17, 19; 64: 2-7  
Ps 80: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
1 Cor 1: 3-9  
Mk 13: 33-37

---

He could not find his Christ in December;  
He could not find the Christ-child at all.  
A rumored consumer, he lost all his bearing  
And he lost Christmas meaning, a mere falderal.

When he met Cyber Monday,  
He looked for the deals  
That would give Giving Tuesday  
A purpose in life.  
A coat to the needy; a small food donation  
The faith kept on calling  
But he lacked inspiration.

He sought White-Out Wednesday  
For last minute bargains.  
He ran to Gray Thursday  
After Thanksgiving Dinner.  
By the time that Black Friday  
Had emptied his wallet  
The notion of prayer  
Had been lost on the sinner.



And just before Christmas  
Was thrust Super Saturday  
The consumer then knew  
That it just did not matter day.  
His fortunes had changed  
At the stir of his heart  
So he skipped Football Sunday  
And for Christ did his part.

She could not find her Christ in December;  
She could not find the Christ-child at all  
Lost of possession, adrift from her bearing  
To find meaning at Christmas, a mere falderal.

When she passed Cyber Monday  
She couldn't care less;  
When she met Giving Tuesday  
She had nothing to give.  
She sought out direction in grim deprivation.  
She thought faith abandoned her  
In desperation.

For her, White-Out Wednesday  
Was all about snow.  
The life of Gray Thursday  
Formed puddles below.  
The means to the season  
dissolved in Black Friday  
So she started to pray  
And her faith led the way.

Just before Christmas  
She met Super Saturday.  
She went to a shelter  
To help her back on her way.  
A small food donation  
And a warm coat for wearing  
With a kind disposition  
Abundantly sharing.

Behind he had left  
The days of consumption  
And gave back to Christmas  
His heart over function.

She found hope in his act;  
A gesture applaud.  
For they saw in each other  
The presence of God.

I used to remember as a child that in the middle of August our family would receive our annual *Swiss Colony Catalogue*, highlighting all the cheap meats and cheese trays that you could purchase at Christmas time. Whereas Mother Church teaches us that prior to Christmas we celebrate four weeks of Advent to prepare ourselves for what is yet to come, the world of the consumer inundates and conditions us to think Christmas before the leaves change their colors in the autumn. In the department stores, Christmas trees usually are set up right after Labor

Day. Commercial markets introduce phrases to the lexicon such as “Gray Thursday,” “Black Friday” and such, giving them the same type of gravitas as issues of life and death so that you feel as if your life depended on buying that big screened television at three o’clock in the morning. And eventually, as we buy into these words of fake gravitas, our precious life has been enveloped and utterly wasted by something empty and without meaning, a gravitas that that has nothing to do with salvation but has everything to do with, as we come to find out later in life, *absolutely nothing*.

The fact is, by the time we actually reach Christmas and open the presents our commercial world is so desperate to sell, we are actually relieved when the half an hour activity of flying wrapping paper is disposed into our recycling bin, as we turn to watch football games or going to the movie theaters and begin to dream about what we will buy our significant other on Valentines’ Day.

The problem into which we often run, though, is that we act as if Christmas has already come at the end of November and we are not even prepared for the season yet to come. In our Christmas frenzy, we

are so ready for the presents that we want to pop them open today, get to the turkey and sing the songs, and yet the season has not yet begun! Thus, as the JS Paluch Bulletin Company asked me to write my Christmas Message to all of you the week before Thanksgiving, I was inspired to pen out this badly read poem which I used to introduce this homily.

In the world inside and outside of faith, the Christmas Season is still four weeks away, four weeks which challenge us to prepare for what is yet to come. For the life of the consumer, Christmas began while the sweltering temperatures were wilting the petunias. To celebrate Christmas early ends up becoming a hollow celebration – we ask for all the goodness of Christmas before we have time to prepare for it. It's like a parent who puts the home-cooked turkey on dining room table for the Christmas feast – it doesn't magically appear; it takes a lot of preparation and work to get that bird ready. For a football team, you just can't go out into the football field and think you can compete without taking time to practice. It takes months of practice and study to get ready for the big games, and even when you do, you still can't beat

the Packers... or the Lions... or practically any other team in the NFC North.

What we are called to do in Advent is to prepare ourselves by investing in a certain gift that transcends any liturgical or secular season, a gift that is universal and precious in scope and yet is fretted away by commercial temptations. In order to prepare in the second gift of eternal life that comes at the second coming of Christ, we first have to invest in the first gift, which is the subject of today's gospel reading.

I found two riddles that shed light on this gift's power – one that highlights the secular world's throwaway philosophy and one that highlights the companion to faith and relationship building with our Lord. Here are the riddles – see if you can answer them, in light of today's gospel message...

*From the Commercial Standpoint*

*This thing all things devours  
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers.  
Gnaws iron, bites steel,  
Grinds hard stones to meal.  
Slays kings, ruins towns  
And beats mountains down.*

*From the Spiritual Standpoint*

*What is more precious than gold  
But cannot be bought, earned or fit to hold?*

The answer to these riddles, this sacred gift that prepares us for the second gift of God's eternal love on the last day, is that of *time*. We know that time is a fleeting gift – there are only 168 hours of it in a week, almost 9,000 of them in a year. If you live over 114 years, you can possess 1,000,000 hours of it, although a third of it being lost to sleep.

We also know that all too often, we lament about how time flies, how time passes too quickly and wonder where all the time has gone in our lives. When someone dies and we attend their funeral, how often do we ask why we did not spend enough time with that person and appreciate how important this person was in our lives? When we get old, do we not ask where all the time went in our lives and whether we invested that time in a worthwhile fashion? As much of it as we possess, time disappears from us much too quickly and thus is too valuable to waste on our superfluous actions.

The whole purpose of today's celebration is that we get ready for both comings of Christ by becoming vigilant in love and by utilizing our time to build our relationship with the Lord. Mark's gospel today challenges us to keep watch, for we do not know when the time is coming that the Lord will return again. As Christ came 2000 years ago at a time when we needed him badly, so we must prepare for Christ's coming again so that his judgment on us will be merciful. The scripture scholars parallel the message to Noah from the Old Testament with today - as God judged the world at the time of Noah, so God will judge us again when he comes again, so we must be ready. That is the challenge for this week of Advent.

If it is not evident in this community or any other, our secular world desires so much to invest their time in the commercial rather than the spiritual that attendance in our services becomes less and less. Of the 168 hours in a week, how much time do we spend with God in adoration or in service or in prayer or in study? When was the last time we attended a daily Mass or went to confession or prayed the rosary or spent an hour with God in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament?



This Advent, we are offering at St. Patrick's so many opportunities to invest this precious time with God in so many different ways, hopefully meeting the needs and desires of those in our community. For instance...

1. Religious Education kids are writing cards for those who are homebound or live in our local nursing homes (Victory Center, Sunny Hill, Essington Place and Senior Star, to name a few). One of the most blessed moments Deacon Paul and I have this Advent Season is when we present these cards and a poinsettia plant to our friends who cannot be with us, telling them how much we love them and care for them.
2. Our Toy Drive for El Centro Vilaseca ends on December 14<sup>th</sup>, when students from our Confirmation Program will deliver the coats and toys you donate (new and gently used) to the sisters so that they can learn about the sisters' mission to care for the poorest of the poor in Joliet.
3. Two times a month, our parish helps serve meals at the Daybreak Shelter in Joliet, as well as us donated breads and other food products from our Food Pantry. This is not an activity in which our Hispanic Community has invested but our faithful seniors have been serving meals at Daybreak for a good many years and always are looking for more help in this cause.
4. Deacon Paul is looking for 100 Hams to distribute to our Food Pantry Families this Advent Season in preparation for Christmas.
5. Maybe this is an opportunity to come to daily Mass and start your day with the Lord that gave us life and came down on earth to save us from our sins.
6. The Rosary is prayed in English every Thursday morning after the 7:30 a.m. Mass and every weekday in noon in Spanish.
7. Confessions are heard every Wednesday from 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. and after the 7:00 p.m. Wednesday Spanish Mass. I will also be

- hearing confessions in Advent on Saturdays at 3:30 p.m. and one half hour prior to all the Masses on Sunday.
8. The Spanish Legion of Mary meets every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. and the *Círculo de Oración* meets every Friday evening at 7:00 p.m.
  9. The Nine Day Novena for Our Lady of Guadalupe begins on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. More information can be found in the bulletin.
  10. Our Guadalupe Celebration on December 12<sup>th</sup> features three hours of Mariachi Music from 5:00 – 8:00 a.m. during *Las Mañanitas* (with a Mass at 6:00 a.m.), a flute concert, rosary and reception at noon and our traditional Guadalupe Mass and dance at 7:00 p.m.
  11. Our *Las Posadas* celebration commemorating Mary & Joseph's journey to the stable and our Lord's birth will take place on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Whatever we do this Advent Season, let us use our time wisely and sacredly to prepare for the only gift that ultimately means anything in our lives – the gift of our Lord's presence and his desire to spend the rest of our lives with him. This is our prayer.