

## FROM THE PASTOR

My brothers and sisters,

Today we begin the Season of Advent. In this time, we are asked to slow down (I know you're saying, "yeah, right!"), and prepare for the coming of the Lord. So often, our preparation is focused on decorating the house, making the Christmas cookies, and *shopping, shopping, shopping* (either in crowded malls – fighting for the perfect parking space and that just-right deal – or on-line and never *really* being sure if you are getting what you think, if it will come on time, and if your credit card information will be hacked). Advent is really about preparing our hearts and souls for the coming of Christ.

So how do we prepare our souls? We get close to Jesus in prayer – spending time with God. Remember that prayer comes first from the *heart*, not the lips – it is in *loving* God, spending time with Him, that we come to know Him more, and allow His great love to work in our lives. If you don't pray every day, maybe you can make the resolve to spend a minute each day in prayer during Advent. If you do pray each day, maybe you can add another minute on to thank Jesus in a special way for coming to Earth and sharing our humanity.

Many of us are doing the *33 Days to Morning Glory* preparation for consecration to Jesus through the hands of Mary. Especially in this season, we see Mary as drawing us closer to her Divine Son. When Jesus came, she taught Him in His humanity how to pray, how to get close to God. She will do the same with us – she will teach us how to pray, she will bring us so close to the Heart of God the Father, her Son, Jesus, and her spouse the Holy Spirit. If we ask Mary, she will teach us how to pray.

I encourage you in this time of Advent to prepare your hearts for the coming of Christ. Maybe if we spent a little bit more time in prayer each day, we could have the strength to resist the temptation to turn this season into a commercial fiasco!

Over the weeks of Advent, I will be writing about prayer – practical ways to pray, as well as obstacles to prayer. In the meantime, as you are struggling to get the outside lights on the house or passing the twelfth Santa in the last three minutes, remember the importance of the season and say a quick prayer to Baby Jesus that we may always remember to welcome Him into our hearts.