

THE PASTOR'S POST

THIS IS SO COOL!

Dear Parish Family:

I have just returned from an incredible event in our parish. We just finished most of the clean up from the 30th Annual Mass and Luncheon for Seniors. What a day and what an incredible amount of work put in to prepare for this day. We have a great leader (and chef!) in Mr. Clagnaz as well as the many others who helped to prepare food over the weekend, parents who decorated, students who served at Mass and at lunch, and wonderful guests so grateful to be with us. With all that goodness, that was not where I felt the presence of God most strongly. It was in this phrase, "This is so cool."

After the luncheon, we created containers for St. Lorenzo's Lunch Box. This is one of our new outreach initiatives where people can come and take a prepared meal anytime they want. This is especially helpful for people who live in rooms or are struggling to find work in the winter months. It was actually an idea that was generated from our student research project on hunger last year. They secured a donated refrigerator, painted it and helped to get it down to outreach. Now they are part of the team (in addition to so many others) who prepare the meals each week.

I asked a bunch of students to help us to prepare the meals after they finished cleaning the Auditorium. I explained to them why we were doing this and who it was for mentioning that everyone who came to the fridge would get a Thanksgiving meal. As one student was boxing the lunches, he looked at me and said, "What we're doing right now, Fr. John, this is so cool."

Hey God...I found you! After a day of a lot of work and a lot of presence....and maybe even a little drowsiness after cleaning pots and pans, there you are! Actually, there you were. I just needed to see.

I hope this is what Advent offers each of us in these days of preparation. First, it does call us to take an accounting of our lives. There will be an end to life on this earth. Are we ready? Are we prepared? I do not say this to be depressing or dreary but to be honest. Advent is a time of opportunity, of preparation for the celebration of Christ at Christmas. Advent is also a time to look at the places in our lives where we need to get things in order to encounter Christ in a very personal



and profound way. Vigilance and honest assessment is needed. We pray for the vision to see those areas in need of conversion. Don't take this lightly.

Second, I hope these days of Advent give us the time and space to see God in the moment, to celebrate the "sacrament of the present moment" if you will. Many times, we can feel God is absent or not engaged or has seemingly forgotten the struggles we are facing in our own lives. He has not forgotten us. At times these God sightings are huge and grand. More often, they are quiet and subtle, requiring us to slow down a bit, review, and ask God to help us to see. Please take time this Advent, in the solemn darkness that this time of year brings, to find time and space for silence. Here are some quick thoughts and ideas...maybe one or two can help each of us be more open to finding God.

- Try to **sit quietly in the same space at the same time each day**. Give yourself 5 or 10 minutes. You can even do this in the car if you have to.
- **Be quiet**. No phone, no music, no tv, etc.
- **Light a candle**...let it be a reminder of the Light of Christ. (I would not recommend this if you're driving in your car. :))
- **Breathe**. Deep breaths, asking God to help you settle.
- Maybe **read one of the Advent scriptures** each day. They are some of the most beautiful ones in the liturgical year. When you find one that speaks to you - stop -and keep coming back to that passage.

As I finish this column, it is very early Tuesday morning and have finished praying the second day of the Novena of Grace. What's the title of today? "Finding God". God...there you are! I found you.

This week on the Feast of the St. Francis Xavier, I will celebrate my thirteenth anniversary as a priest. What a gift from God...and a gift that is even more fulfilling in coming to know and to be known by you here at St. Brigid's. Thank you for helping me to find God again and again!

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

Featherman