

# THE PASTOR'S POST

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Dear Parish Family:

We are in the process of painting Parish Outreach Center. You read a few weeks ago about the incredible donation we received for a new floor in the first floor of the building. What a gift! Now we are trying to clean up the walls and the like (and yes, I know we should have done the painting first!). We have a few incredible volunteers (and can always use a few more!) who are helping to paint the first floor of the Outreach center. I want this to become an even more welcoming space in our parish for here, Jesus is present, most especially in those who are in need.

One of our painting volunteers started to paint one of the walls and texted me, "Fr. John, you better get over here." Fearing a major crisis, I was right! The color for the wall was not the color we imagined. The artichoke is beautiful! The softened green, not so much! A crisis indeed! He saw my face and said, "Fr. John, what are you going to do now?" He was smirking because he was not a fan of the color selections anyway.

What should we do? This is the question of the Gospel today. They ask John the Baptist three times - what should we do? This is a beautiful question to pray with in these final weeks of Advent. I imagine this is a question we are often up against. Sometimes it may not be critical, i.e. where to get something to eat, what color to paint the wall. Other times, it is a much more critical question about a loved one, our own well-being and important impending decisions.

I see a few possibilities from the Scriptures that might even help with a few paint colors in these final days of Advent!

I suppose we can settle. We can choose to leave it as it is. Ignore the need for change. The softened green is not terrible. It makes the walls a little pale and bland. To figure out another color, find another use for the paint, etc. can be a bit of work. We can settle. I suppose this is true in other areas of our lives, no? Like those who come to John the Baptist, they could have just settled and said "Forget it, let's just keep going in the same direction." It's a lot less work. (This, of course, was the advice of my painter friend.)

Or we can choose to make a change. This is the



invitation for each of the readings today, no? Isaiah, St. Paul, and John the Baptist. Fear not, rejoice, and make the necessary changes. More so, these are the signs of one heading in the right direction, on the right path as John the Baptist lays out.

The first and second readings both mention fear and anxiety. Undoubtedly, these are signs that we are on the right path. As one who can, at times, struggle with both, we come upon these days of Advent longing for the peace of the newborn Jesus. Fear and anxiety can bring us to a place of paralysis. Often, even in the spiritual life, we resist any kind of change even though we know it is for our best.

As we celebrate Gaudete Sunday or Rejoice Sunday on this Third Sunday of Advent, the readings today and this time of year call us to move in the spiritual life. This is what we should do!

It is not just about finding new things to do. Rather, for we who walk the spiritual path, it is "by prayer and petition", making our requests to God. Then...we know the peace of God and are more open to the conversion and changes God is asking of us in our lives. In the midst of some busy days ahead, we must find the time to sit, be still, to listen quietly to what God is asking. I find the darkness of these days a little more conducive to that quiet reflection. Then the prophecy of Isaiah becomes ours, "he will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love" and we will know it in our hearts and in our lives. Then, conversion and change become a little easier. This is a reason for rejoicing! This is the goal of what we must do.

Ok - so away with the Softened Green. Time for the Saybrook Sage!

Please pray for me. I promise the same.

P.S. Check out our new paint department in Off 5th Avenue, our parish thrift shop. We have a beautiful soft green for you to consider! You'll love it! :)