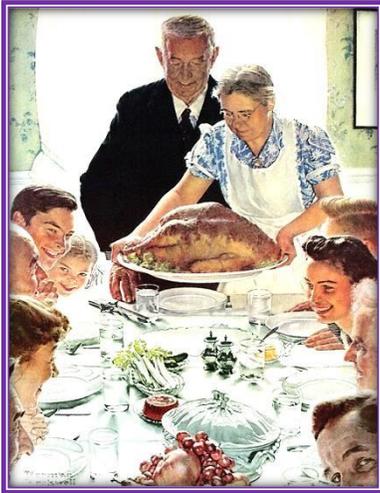




PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS/PREPARING FOR CHRIST (THE ADVENT SEASON)



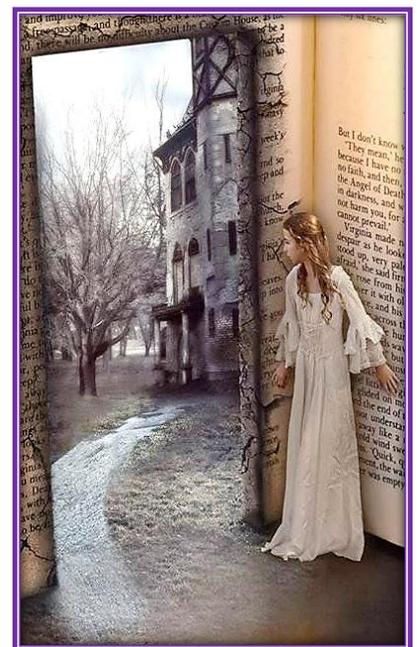
While the days of December have yet to be numbered, the countdown to those days has begun. The first “big day” Thanksgiving Day came and went, and we did – with or without a lot of food and with more or less (or maybe even) ten people – as we have in past years: get through that day! And quite honestly perhaps in years past it was too many people and too much food; especially when you consider how many people do not have anyone to spend time with, and how many people – even in America – through no fault of their own, know not where their next meal will come from. Homelessness and hunger however, have been with us long before Coronavirus, and they will remain with us (as will Coronavirus) for a long time to come. That in the words of Bruce Hornsby is: just the way it is; or as it might be said today: “it is what it is”!

Remaining with us too however, is God! That is right, as visitors to our Parish website (www.ohrfreeport.org) who livestream Sunday Mass have heard since March: “You are there. I am here. God is with us.” And it is His Presence, that allows us (just as it did our ancestors during the great depression, the Spanish Flu, and the Black Plague) to face any challenges that the days of December or any month of the year may present us with; the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, the diagnosis of a terminal illness, a noisy neighbour, ... you name it: with God *we can face it and conquer it* (cf. I Saint John v:4).

Please, use the upcoming days of Advent to “wait” for Christmas, and not to celebrate it in the so-called “holiday spirit” as if Christmas was just the next “holiday” after Thanksgiving Day. Use these days to stay home rather than to go out; not because an executive order may mandate it, but because you may be called to do it; called by Our Holy Redeemer Who says: *come to Me – not only in the manger of Bethlehem, not only in the Virgin’s womb, and not only in the tabernacle of an absolutely beautiful church, but come to Me dwelling within you by virtue of your Baptism* (cf. Saint Matthew XI:28).

The Holy Season of Advent is indeed an opportunity, with help from your Church, family Bible, and Holy Rosary, to go within yourself and find not a *shopping mall bargain* but a *heavenly Treasure*. Before you embark on that journey inside to Him, journey outside to others and:

- ✠ love them as He has loved you;
- ✠ forgive them as He has forgiven you;
- ✠ admonish them as He has admonished you;
- ✠ pray for them as He has prayed for you;
- ✠ teach them as He has taught you;
- ✠ nourish them as He has nourished you;
- ✠ do good for them as He has done good for you;
- ✠ serve them as He has served you;
- ✠ comfort them as He has comforted you;
- ✠ encourage them as He has encouraged you;



And “when you see these things happening, know that He (and not just Christmas) is near, at the gates.”