



**F A T H E R
ANTON'S WORDS
OF WISDOM:**

We are getting close to the end of the Advent season and hopefully as we have journeyed together we have taken the time needed to reflect on the theme of each week: Faith, H o p e , Reconciliation and Love. Faith gifted to us by a loving Father which allows us to live in h o p e , reconciliation that brings healing and peace; so that the love that we

proclaim to have for God and each other, can shine like a beacon in a broken world. In every age since Christ's coming we have struggled and continue to struggle with wars, hunger, prejudice, and oppression. It would seem that even for those who claim to follow Christ, the message is still not clear.

We celebrate the birth of a child who for many years was insignificant in the lives of those around him. Born of a young maiden in poverty and disgrace... you can imagine the stories that went around about Mary when she was found to be pregnant before her marriage to Joseph. People were even more cruel and judgemental then than they are today. The significance of Christ's life was not recognized until he began his ministry at the age of 30, and because of his radical style of ministry it didn't take long for the people to understand that there was something special about this "Jesus of Nazareth". He broke the rules, condemned the religious and civil leaders of his times, and opened a new way of understanding God's love for his children. They began to understand that they did not need to earn God's love, they were simply loved-no strings attached. They could be reconciled with this loving Father without the blood of goats and calves – with a contrite heart and genuine love they were able to feel God's healing power without

threats of condemnation or punishment. This was new and it was life-changing and life-giving!

On Monday Dec. 19th. we have an opportunity to “prepare him room.” We will celebrate FORGIVENESS VESPERS at 7 pm. It is a wonderful opportunity not only for individual reconciliation but also to strengthen the community – for we are the body of Christ. Just as our physical bodies can feel the pain of any of its members; we as the Mystical Body of Christ all suffer through our own actions and the actions of others. We seek physical healing from our Doctors, and the relief of our pain, and soon our bodies become whole again. We need to seek the same healing spiritually, so that when life throws us a curve ball as it often does, we can remain centred on the Christ within to help us through. There is only one thing that we can be sure of as we travel the road of life, and that is that we are deeply loved, always forgiven, and never alone. This is the gift we came to understand when God chose to dwell among us in the person of Jesus, and once accepted it is the gift that keeps on giving.

Loving Father, help me to find the courage to acknowledge my weaknesses and to seek forgiveness for those times when I could have done better. As I prepare to celebrate Your coming to dwell among us and your faithfulness, help me to empty my heart of all grudges, hostilities and anything that prevents me from discovering your presence in me and all I meet. My heart is ready God, my heart is ready. Amen.