



**FATHER ANTON'S WORDS OF WISDOM:** Thanksgiving Day has come and gone and as we are out and about we already see the Christmas decorations displayed for sale. Indeed in our today's society we are caught up in the commercialism of the season, but it doesn't have to be that way. We can turn this 'negative' into a 'positive' by changing the way we think.

I used to allow myself to get upset about the pushing of Christmas by the retail chains so early, but now when I see the decorations and cards out so early I let them remind me of what a wonderful gift we received at Christmas, and that this gift was not bought in any store, or advertised as something I had to go out and get right away, no it was freely given, and must be freely received. Indeed it was and is the gift of all gifts and for all time! Practicing a grateful life means being aware always of the goodness of God toward all his children. It means being appreciative of all that is around us in nature, at work, at home, at church, and in our world. There is not a moment of our lives that we do not breathe in God's gift of life, and there is not a moment of our lives when we are alone.

Advent is coming quickly and I think now is a good time to ask ourselves how we can properly prepare to "make him room." It's never too early or too late to think about God's goodness, or to share that goodness. Our whole life is an advent or lent; in other words it is a journey of anticipation to something much deeper and bigger than us. Sometimes we get so caught up into what we think our life should be that we don't see how wonderful it really is. There's nothing more beautiful than a rainbow, a reminder of God's promise that he would never harm us, because humanity by its very nature is weak. We need each other and we need God's presence.

Halloween is just a week away. Some people think that it's terrible for Christians to celebrate such a "pagan" festival. I don't agree. Halloween while it is fun for the kid's and gives the adults the pleasure of seeing the innocence and simplicity of childhood is also known as the "Eve of all Saints." This holiday too, reminds us of God's faithfulness. The day after Halloween is known as "All Saints Day." It celebrates God's faithfulness not only in life but also in death and life after death. It reminds us that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. It's a good thing to take every opportunity we have to enjoy and participate in life, and it's a good thing to remember that all these experiences remind us of the joy God's wants us to share.

**Christians are supposed to be happy people; we believe that God is with us always and that his love is unconditional. We're supposed to share the "Good News" with one another, yet more often than not we give in to despair. Advent is the joyful anticipation of something great that is going to happen. Life should be the joyful anticipation that something great is about to happen over and over again, because that is the human experience of a loving God... He reveals that love to us every moment of our lives but we need to open our minds and our hearts to receive it fully.**

Let us pray: Loving God, You do reveal Your love to me at every moment of my life. Help me to slow down and to be more attentive to Your presence. Remind me that to experience that love in my life, I must make an effort to understand and live simply the "Good News." Give me the courage to share this message as revealed in Jesus Your Son who was, is, and always will be the shining of example of what humanity can achieve when always united with You. Amen.