

TO KNOW GOD, NOT JUST KNOW OF HIM

We enter each Advent season with great anticipation of the coming of the promised Savior. We recall Christ's Nativity and we prepare for His return. How will you prepare?

Do you **know** God, or do you only know **of** Him? To **know** someone is to enter into a relationship with that person. A nourishing relationship is founded on love, trust and mutual self-giving. The more intimate your relationship becomes, the more freely and deeply you can share yourself and the more you can rely on your beloved to nourish and support you. This is the ideal for which we all yearn and which can be perfectly fulfilled only in relationship with God.

From the beginning of creation, God has invited us into relationship with Him. In six days, God created. On the seventh day, God rested. "So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy." (Genesis 2:3) The seventh day, marking the fullness or completion of creation, is the day on which God invited us into relationship with Him. On each seventh day, we celebrate the Sunday Mass, during which we enter into this relationship founded on love, trust and mutual self-giving.

All of Scripture tells us of profound relationships with God; Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David, Mary and Joseph, Christ and the Apostles. Promises are made and fulfilled. Challenges are met with faith, hope and trust. With each of these individuals, we see a deep and personal relationship of mutual self-giving as they seek God's guidance and offer their lives with trust and reliance on His protection and providence.

The first Sunday of Advent marks the new Liturgical year, when we begin again this recollection of our history in the new cycle of readings for the Mass. Each Sunday, we hear and recall the relationships between God and His people and we are called to enter into our own relationship with Him. God's ultimate self-giving through Christ, begs for a response.

What promises has God made to you? What challenges do you face? How will He guide you and provide for you? Are you able to trust Him; to freely and deeply share yourself and rely on your

*beloved to nourish and support you? If you aren't sure how to answer these questions, come to the Mass. Listen to the readings. Listen to the Psalms. Listen to the words of the Eucharistic Prayers. From this, **learn how to pray**. The whole of the Liturgy is **your** prayer to God. The Mass is not a presentation **to** you, it is a presentation **by** you. The Mass is an act of **mutual self-giving** between you and God.*

Come and enter into relationship with God through the Mass. Nurture your relationship by, reading Scripture with the help of a study Bible, scripture commentary or study group. Read about the meaning of the Liturgy. Read about the Saints. Seek healing and guidance in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Seek nourishment in the Eucharist.

Seek to **know** God, not just know **of** Him. See how He has loved others and know that He waits for you to enter into His love. He is patient. He is kind. He is not jealous or proud. He is not quick tempered. He does not brood over injury or rejoice over wrongdoing. He bears all things and endures all things. Come to Mass each Sunday during Advent. Enter into the Joy of the Nativity of our Lord. Allow the Mass to help you carry that Christmas joy through the cold months of winter. Look for healing and spiritual growth through participation in the Mass and the season of Lent. Be encouraged and uplifted by the hope and joy of the Easter season. Each time you sing Alleluia during Mass in Summer and Fall, remember that Easter joy.

Then ask yourself again, *what promises has God made to you? What challenges have you faced? How did He guide you and provide for you? Were you better able to trust Him; to more freely and deeply share yourself and rely on your beloved to nourish and support you? Prepare yourself to greet Him as one who is **known** and **loved**.*