



## United Independent Catholic Church

### Office of the Presiding Bishop

Dear Friends:

Of all the liturgical seasons in the church year, my favorite is Advent. I like the textures, the colors and the readings. Like all of us, life, in one way or another, life has been tough. Let's face it, family struggles, financial struggles, losses, death and the sense of being alone. Life can be a struggle and sometimes we feel like the weight of the world is upon us.

Life struggles are nothing new to the human experience. Our Jewish ancestors lived in an inhospitable land and most were in poverty. There was the Law of Moses that they had to live and the religious leaders of their time were in positions of power. Their view of the Mosaic Law was unbending. They failed to provide any comfort that the people desperately needed. The land was constantly under foreign occupation and the Jewish people suffered even more.

Yet, the prophets taught the people to hope for a messiah. My favorite Advent Readings are from Isaiah. "Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her service is at an end, her guilt is expiated; Indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD double for all her sins. Go up onto a high mountain, Zion, herald of glad tidings; Cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem, herald of good news! Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: Here is your God! Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care." In another section of Isaiah God tells the people of Israel, Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; Then will the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the mute will sing.

In so many ways we are not different from the ancient people of Israel. We also look for comfort and look for someone to save us. If anything, the advent season is a season of quiet hope. The color of the Advent Season is dark blue. This symbolizes the breaking of the dawn and the hope of a new day. Jesus is the dawn of the new day. He came that we might hear the Good News and be saved. It is Jesus that is that comfort that Isaiah speaks of. He is the Shepard that will lead us from our darkness and sin. He is the one who gathers us in his arms. He is the one who will redeem us from our daily burdens and cares.

May this advent season find us hoping and trusting in the promises that God has made to us. May this season prepare us for the birth of Jesus, who is the promise that was given to us.

Sincerely,

Bishop Jerry