

Walking up and down the hallway between the church and the parish office during the day these past two weeks, you could hear the children from our school learning and practicing for the Christmas concerts to be held this week. Last weekend, watching parishioners young and old gather around the giving tree selecting an item or two to purchase for those in need was heartwarming. The blessing of the Advent wreaths for the school and the many wreaths that will be used for our religious education classes is a sure sign that Advent has begun. These are just a few of the ways in which we are preparing as a parish for the annual celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Spiritually, our children in the school, in our grade school religious education program, and in our junior high and high school programs prepared for this annual celebration by receiving the sacrament of reconciliation this past week. The 10 plus hours that Fr. Matt and I, along with a few visiting priests, spent with our children listening to their confessions and administering absolution was truly a grace of healing that is a powerful gift of this season.

Now it is time for the parents and other adults of our parish to prepare for the celebration of the birth of our Lord by sharing in the sacrament of reconciliation. This Tuesday, December 12, at 6:00 PM, there is an Advent Reconciliation Service at St. Patrick Church in Washington and **on Monday, December 18, at 7:00 PM our parish Advent Reconciliation Service** is scheduled. On Saturdays, December 16 and 23, confession time will be 3:30 – 4:15 PM.

As we head in the Gospel today: *“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths!”*

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jerry