

## OUR MUSIC, OUR FAITH

*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who lived in a land of gloom a light has shone. Though darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds, the peoples, upon you the LORD will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen. Isaiah 9:1 and 60:2*

Dear friends in Christ,

We are well into the Advent season, a time to reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. If you're like me, these are more than themes to you; they are feelings that you truly long for, especially during these trying times. As a musician who sleeps, breathes, and lives music, I indeed find it difficult to see the light in what feels like musical darkness. As one who deeply loves his family and friends and is unable to see them because of the pandemic, I struggle to see the glory beyond the thick clouds. With the announcement of promising vaccines, news reporters frequently refer to "the light at the end of the tunnel." Isaiah tells us that we who walk in darkness will see a great light, with that light being our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The season Advent affords us the time to focus on the coming of the Lord—not just the day of the Messiah's birth, but also his coming to us through the Holy Eucharist and when he will come again at the end of ages. We use this time to focus on the Lord and what He wants for us, not necessarily what we think we want for ourselves. We pray to God that He might sustain our hope in the Lord; we ask the Holy Spirit to bring us peace; we strive to find joy in the Lord in all we do; and we try to love God and neighbor as Jesus commanded.

The solemnity and simplicity of the four Sundays of Advent typically are followed by a beautifully adorned and ornamented church. We look forward to the trees, lights, and bows. We look forward to the return of the Gloria in the Mass, and we obviously look forward to singing our favorite Christmas carols. Many of these will happen this year as usual, and I urge you to find joy in them. All federal, state, local, and archdiocesan guidance emphasize the minimization or elimination of congregational singing, and sadly this will apply at Christmas. And yet this does not mean that we cannot find joy in music at Christmas:

- Join us for a **Christmas Carol Sing-Along** in the church parking lot on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 4pm. Invite your friends and family, and because we'll be outdoors, we can sing our hearts out, safely!
- Be sure to come to Christmas Eve or Day Mass early enough to hear some of the beautiful prelude music we have planned for about 20 minutes before each Mass. You'll hear your favorite Christmas carols and you "sing along in your heart."
- Create your own opportunities to sing or listen to your favorite Christmas music. For example, gather your household each evening to sing a carol or two. You might also coordinate with another family or two to go caroling. It's a wonderful way to bring the joy of the Lord and the Christmas spirit to one's neighbors, particularly those who are homebound.

Let us pray that we might remember that Advent is not simply a stepping stone to Christmas, but rather a season that calls us to reflect on the many ways that the Lord has come—and will come—to us.

AMDG,



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