

Sermon, Father William J. Albinger

Sunday December 13, 2009

Advent 3 C 2009

In the Name of our ever creating, ever loving, ever sustaining God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

This will be a very brief sermon today because the little kids are ready for the Pageant. Last week I used the example of company coming to visit to illustrate the Advent messages of being alert and being prepared. Living on Maui, we get a lot of company. When company is coming, we look at our home with different and far more critical eyes. We see things as they are. We see things we've spent effort to avoid seeing – all that clutter, the dirt in the corners of the floors. There is good news and bad news in all this. The bad news is we see all the work that has to be done and all the clutter that has to be put right. The good news is that the place never looked better. After we've finished cleaning, it even smells new and clean!

We are called to that with our lives during Advent as we prepare for Christmas and celebrate the coming of the Christ Child. We don't have much time left, so I'll give you two suggestions of places to look to see what work might need to be cleaned and tidied up. The first is our appointment books – how we spend our most precious asset – or time. Where are we wasting time and where are we neglecting our responsibilities. How are we spending our time? The second place is our checkbooks and credit card statements. Where are we putting our resources? What is wasteful and what are we neglecting? Are we paying enough attention to our time and resources in order to use them to best advantage?

Our Gospel lesson tells us how to live after we have done our inventory. The crowds came to John in the desert to repent. "How, they asked do we get right with our Creator?" He told them straight off that don't think belonging to the chosen people is enough to be in right relationship

with God. The same goes for us. It is not who we are that matters – it is how we live our lives. When the common people asked John what to do – he told them to lead lives of compassion and generosity towards those less fortunate and in need. Even the hated tax collectors and feared soldiers could get into right relationship with God by being pono – being honest and upright in their business dealings.

So as we anticipate the joy of Christmas morning, let's be mindful that it will be all the more joyous if we have done our work and are able to greet that day not only with a clean house but also with well examined and renewed lives. Amen. So let's hear and see the Christmas Story!