



# Proclaim Christ *and* Make Disciples through the Sacramental Life *of the* Church.

ignite • renew • energize • ignite • renew • energize • ignite • renew • energize

## The Holy Season of Advent: New Year's Resolutions for Discipleship



Archbishop  
Jerome E. ListECKI

With the coming of Advent, a new Church Year begins once again. This is not a random flip of the calendar page or the mundane marking of another year with the next

sequential number. Advent is not about human “chronological time.” Instead, it is what the biblical writers would call “Kairos Time.” Advent is the fullness of time, the time when God acts, a time of call and decision. Advent is God’s time!

Advent is inviting us to mark time differently. It is calling us to a conversion of heart where we recognize that our time is not our own! So Advent is the right and perfect opportunity to look at our lives and make our new year’s resolutions for discipleship. What resolutions should be at the top of our list? We simply need to listen to the key people and themes within the Advent Gospels to find our way.

### **Resolution #1: Prepare to Meet Jesus Today**

A stark theme of Advent is radical readiness – today and every day. The call of the season is to be “on watch,” because we do not know the day or the hour when Christ will return. The Scriptures issue this haunting warning:



“And so you be prepared because the Son of Man is coming at a time you do not expect” (Mt 24:44). We do not know when we will need to give an accounting for our lives. So let’s live for heaven today through earnest prayer, Sacramental practice, right behavior, and a serving heart.

### **Resolution #2: Make Way for Jesus through Repentance**

John the Baptist is the Advent prophet who challenges us to examine our hearts. He knows that, like the Pharisees and Sadducees of his day, we too can become self-righteous and self-satisfied. And when pride enters our hearts, we become closed off to Jesus. We need to open a door and that door is a repentant heart. John the Baptist sounds the call: “Repent,

for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near” (Mt. 3:2). So, let’s make a straight path for Jesus through participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **Resolution #3: Worship Jesus as the One Savior and Lord**

Advent can easily become a season of excessive distractions, overwhelming busyness, and conflicting priorities. We can lose our focus on what, or more appropriately who, is the center and anchor for our lives. But Jesus eliminates all doubts about who is our one Lord and Savior: “Go announce to John what you hear and see. The blind see and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised and the poor have good news preached to

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## Archdiocese of Milwaukee – Church on the Move

We are to be a “Church on the move” and to “ignite, renew and energize” the archdiocese. This was Archbishop ListECKi’s message a little over two years ago at the conclusion of our archdiocesan Synod, which was a time of spiritual renewal and visioning for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Someone recently recommended that we describe the Synod and the initiatives coming from the Synod as “a new way of doing Church.”

We have been given a new mission statement to guide us as we go forward – “Proclaim Christ and Make Disciples through the Sacramental Life of the Church.” We would all do well to have this mission at the heart of everything we do, personally and as a parish. We would need to approach things differently if this really was the central focus in our lives and in our parishes.

The top priorities of the Synod focused on Evangelization and the Sunday Mass. Each of us is asked to look at ways we could be more hospitable as we encounter people at church. How can we prepare ourselves for Mass, to be in the right frame of mind to encounter Christ? How can we be welcoming to others and make others feel at home at Sunday Mass, especially those who are visiting, are “seekers” or are not “regulars” at Mass or our parish?

We often hear about “stewardship,” but don’t always connect it to becoming disciples and how living out our faith as followers of Christ, calls us to give ourselves to others. This entails giving of our time and sharing our



gifts and seeing God’s presence in everyday situations and the people we encounter. Stewardship was another main priority from the Synod and will be a stronger focus for our archdiocese in the upcoming next year.

The Holy Spirit’s guidance and wisdom was very apparent at the Synod gathering and it continues to be as we look at new ways of being a Church on the move.

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them” (MT. 11:5). So, let’s bow down to Jesus, the Mighty Messiah, in lives of prayer and worship.

#### **Resolution #4: Practice the Obedience of Mary and Joseph**

Advent is the season celebrating the coming of the Savior, Jesus. God is

up to something big! He is becoming flesh in Jesus to dwell among us, teach us the ways of the Kingdom, and die on the cross for our sins so that we can rise with him to new life. But all of this is predicated on Mary and Joseph saying yes to God’s great plans. And

in obedience they do just that. “Joseph awoke from sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took home his wife” (Mt. 1:24). So let’s practice humble obedience to God’s will in our daily lives.

A blessed Advent to you all!



## Parishioners to Deaf Community: “You Belong Here!”

### ‘Interpreting’ Evangelization and the Sunday Mass

When Archbishop Jerome ListECKi said, “We need a culture change, so the Sunday Mass is given primacy of place,” the Deaf Ministry Team at St. Andrew Parish, Delavan took that to heart and decided to share more of Catholic Deaf culture with hearing parishioners.

#### Empower, Encourage

One of the goals of the Deaf Ministry Team was to train and enable more Deaf readers at Sunday Mass, in an effort to empower and encourage that community to participate more fully in the Eucharist. Several people from the Deaf community came forward to serve and today, continue this task of forming disciples.

Additionally, two students from the Wisconsin School for the Deaf (who attend the parish) received their First Communion this year. Wanting to share this joyful day with everyone, the entire Deaf Community celebrated that Sunday, with many of the ministerial roles for the Mass (servers, readers and extraordinary ministers) held by Deaf parishioners. The Mass was celebrated in American Sign Language with Fr. Christopher Klusman, with a voice interpreter for the hearing. It was a wonderful day of praise and worship celebrated by all.

Throughout Wisconsin and beyond, there are Deaf Catholics who hunger for these types of opportunities. It’s



*Leonard Peacock proclaims the Good News at a recent Sunday Mass in American Sign Language (ASL) to the congregation of St. Andrew Parish. An interpreter voices for the hearing parishioners.*

amazing how the Holy Spirit constantly breathes new life by **igniting, renewing** and **energizing** the Church in southeastern Wisconsin.

#### Interested in learning more?

St. Andrew Parish offers religious education for the Deaf to all students from lower elementary to seniors in high school. Classes are taught in American Sign Language (ASL) so the students have full access to learning about God’s love in their native language.

The Deaf Ministry Team also prepares students for First Reconciliation (with a Deaf priest who can sign), First Communion and Confirmation.

A Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. that is interpreted in ASL, with a once-a-month Mass in ASL with Fr. Christopher Klusman and Deacon David Sommers, only one of two Deaf priest/deacon pairs in the world.

For additional information about Deaf Ministry at St. Andrew Parish, please contact Patty Kostechka, (262) 728-9751.

### Did you know?

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has a whole office dedicated to Deaf/Hard of Hearing Ministry! The office, through the leadership of Fr. Christopher Klusman, associate director, and Terri Matenaer, coordinator, exists to enable all Catholic Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to participate fully in the liturgical, educational, pastoral, spiritual, and human concerns ministries in the Church.

To learn more about this vital ministry, please visit [www.archmil.org/deafministry](http://www.archmil.org/deafministry).

## Format of this Newsletter is Changing



This newsletter began over three years ago as way to help people learn about and prepare for the archdiocesan Synod that was held in 2014. We continued with a similar format following the Synod to keep everyone informed about the efforts that are going into implementing priorities identified through the Synod process.

Recently we have decided on a new way to present the information included in these newsletters. We are going to replace

this four-page printed publication with a one-page article from Archbishop Listecki that parishes and schools will be invited to include in their bulletins, newsletters, and emails.

The archbishop's articles will still focus on how the mission and priorities that came from the archdiocesan Synod are guiding the work of parishes and the archdiocese. These columns will be sent to parishes and schools in English and Spanish on a quarterly basis. The new one-page articles will also continue to be included on the archdiocesan website at [www.archmil.org/synod](http://www.archmil.org/synod).

We hope you find this new format easy to read and beneficial. Please contact Randy Nohl, Director of Synod Implementation, at [nohrl@archmil.org](mailto:nohrl@archmil.org) or 414-758-2216 if you have any questions.

## Prayer for the Mission of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*(Shortened Version)*

Almighty and ever living God,  
we praise you and we bless you,  
for you are great indeed!  
Grant, we pray,  
as on that first Pentecost,  
that tongues of fire may descend  
upon us,  
and that the driving wind of  
your Holy Spirit  
may blow boldly into our hearts.  
Embolden us, O God,  
so that we may go forth to proclaim  
your Gospel and renew  
the face of the earth.  
In this Archdiocese of Milwaukee,  
we humbly pray for  
strength and fortitude  
to follow your great commission:  
to go and make disciples of all people,  
living our faith through  
word and deed.  
We ask all this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.



## ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE MISSION STATEMENT

To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through his saving death and resurrection by calling, forming and sending disciples to go and make new disciples. As a people, we are called to encounter Jesus and grow as disciples through the sacramental life of the Church.