

DEACON TONY'S HOMILY FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A wealthy American was being shown around the Vatican and as the Pope was in Castel Gandolfo he was taken into the Pope's private apartment. On the Pontiff's desk he noticed a gold telephone and was told that it was a direct line to God. When he asked if he could use it, he was told that it would cost a half million dollars. He didn't call. He stopped in Sicily on the way back to America and visited the parish where his ancestors came from. He stopped by the family parish to check the parish registers and while there he noticed that the Pastor also had a golden telephone on his desk. Again, he was told that it was a direct line to God and when he asked how much a call would cost? He was told 12 lira for three minutes. The stunned American said they wanted to charge him a half million dollars in the Vatican. "Yes" said the priest, "but over here it is just a local call." (I do not know the source of this story.)

Wouldn't be nice to have a direct line to talk to God? Do you think God would like to have a direct line to talk to you? During these times during Advent, we try to do extra prayers and good deeds in order for us to walk a closer walk with Jesus. Let us keep in mind that we are making it easier for Jesus to find us.

Now in the first reading from Isaiah, God is instructing the prophet to comfort His people. I am thinking that God wants me to have a message of comfort for His people too. So here goes.

I will say this as tenderly as I can. Our sins have been atoned for. All we have to do is examine our consciences and repent. Be open to a change of heart and prepare a way for the Lord. There might be things we are doing that are lawful but still a distraction from our relationship with Jesus. They prevent that direct line that God wants established between us.

Make straight that highway for our God to find us. We have the sacrament of Reconciliation which offers the forgiving grace of God to help us make that highway straight. God's grace will fill the valleys and make the rugged land plain and easy to travel. It will level the mountain that we struggle to climb.

THEN THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED!

Then we will know Jesus as our Shepherd, who feeds His flock; and in His arms gathers the lambs, and carrying them in His bosom, while leading the ewes with care. I can't say it any more tenderly than that!

So, there are two wonderful ways to prepare for Christmas:

- Personal conversion.
 - What better present could I give myself?
- Leading someone else to know and experience the love of Jesus.
 - What better present could I give to another person?