



Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace

Cathedral of the Honolulu Diocese • Founded 1843 • National Historic Register

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024

Beloved Disciples of Christ,

Greetings of peace, love, and joy!

“To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul.” Psalm 25: 1

Shopping here, shopping there, and shopping everywhere. The malls all over our nation and around our State are so crowded. Buying online or in person is holding us up and getting stressed. The face pace of life is upon us again. We scramble for what we need to accomplish before Christmas comes and as the year ends. Lots of names to put in our list and what gifts to buy and give. Remember the food, clothing, jewelry, and accessories to wear; thus, our list goes on and on. STOP!

Let us take a moment to ask ourselves, are all these necessary? If you think they are, think of the people who cannot even have decent clothing or food to eat on their table. Think of the people fleeing their country who became refugees of other nations where their feet lead them. Think of the families who are grieving for the loss of a loved one. What about those who have lost their jobs? Think of our life’s journey and where it is heading? The relationships we have, the work we do, and the faith we live. Are they not all wonderful and pleasing? Or does it need some transformation, if not a total one, to live our lives better, if not the best? Don’t you think we need to stop the hustle and bustle of life and be more aware of what is happening in our lives, families, nation, and world?

Greetings of Merry Christmas to Happy Holidays. Throughout the years, we have lost our focus on Christ Himself, the source of all the celebrations ahead of us. We have turned our Holy Days into holidays. And losing the meaning of Advent as a time for preparation for the Lord’s Coming and His Birth. We have lost the essence of this season into merry-making and worldly lures of materialism. Let it not be so.

Our Lord calls us to a halt today to deepen our relationship with Him more. To know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. If our minds and hearts are focused on Him, our ways, thoughts, words, values, and whole being are formed accordingly.

Advent is upon us. A time to prepare our whole being, our soul more focused on God, our neighbor, and ourselves. And when that day and time that the Lord will come, we can pray like the Psalmist, *“To You, O Lord, I Lift Up My Soul.”*

God’s grace is always upon us. He gives us a lot of opportunities to grow in our faith and life. Let us take the Season of Advent as a time of grace and be open to where the Lord will lead us, especially when facing tough challenges. Let us offer these days of the season to commit ourselves more and more to Christ.

Your friend in Jesus,

Fr. Pascual