

## **Ponderings from the Parish House**

*“Let us stay alert and sober.”*

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul reminds them (us) that we are “children of the light”; we know the truth that we will see the day of the Lord. In the Gospel today, we are reminded that each of us has talents we are to use for God’s work. In these changing times in the church, there are many ways to “stay alert” and use our talents, and at St. Francis, we constantly challenge ourselves to do just that.

On the first Sunday of Advent, November 27<sup>th</sup>, we will see some changes to the Mass prayers. For some people, memories of Masses from the past will allow them to ease into the “new” prayers like a familiar dance. But like anything new, for some of us there may be challenges at first; it may even seem somewhat cumbersome to have to read and pay such close attention to something we’re used to having memorized. But just as we’ve learned new songs, the prayers will soon become part of us.

The first Sunday of Advent also brings new missals for the liturgical year. To encourage our growing Spanish-speaking community as they learn English, we will now have bilingual books, showing the prayers in English and Spanish, side-by-side, making it easier to follow along with either language. Since the readings will also be side-by-side, the second reading for Mass will be in Spanish. This also might prove a challenge to hear at first, but keep in mind that it will now be easier to follow along in the book.

Of the many talents I have observed at St. Francis Parish, flexibility stands out as a strong one. We have cultivated the ability to work and worship together, and the fruit of this has been an enriched prayer and community life. Rather than shy away from challenge, hoping that change might go away, we embrace it. We are ever alert to the possibilities that will help us grow, in numbers as much as parish family.

Paul says “the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.” But nothing can steal our desire to live lives of learning, praying and sharing together as the Christian family that we are.

*Peace, Sheila*