

***From the Pastor's Desk***  
*December 18, 2011*

As we enter the stretch run of Advent, we are checking things off our “to do” list. Christmas cards, check. Christmas shopping, check. Grocery shopping, check. Invitations to social events sent, check. How about: Confession, check? Have you made a good confession this Advent? If not, you still have an opportunity to do so. Our parish Penance Service is this Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. The Penance Service will consist of a brief Liturgy of the Word, followed by the possibility for individual confessions. I expect that there will be a dozen or so priests available to hear confessions.

By mid-December, I estimate that I've heard about 14 hours of confessions this month, basically an average of a hour of confessions a day. No doubt, my brother priests have heard more confessions, as I have missed a couple of the penance services in neighboring parishes. Although we hear many confessions this time of year, it is very edifying to us priests that so many want to “get right with God” and work on their spiritual life. Hearing confessions is also a good reminder to us clergy that we are also in need of God's objective forgiveness that is given to us through the beautiful Sacrament of Reconciliation. As I often say, it's not that God doesn't know our sins. He knows them better than us. But when we confess them to Him, through the ministry of the priest, we are acknowledging our responsibility for the sin, and asking for our Lord, our Divine Physician, to use his scalpel to cut it away from us and to purify and cleanse us. Isn't this really what Advent is about? We want to get that stuff out of the way that comes between us and God, so that we can make room for Christ, our King.

In Christ,  
*Father Berg*