

December 2017

Dear Friends,

In December, especially in Edmonton, we notice that the hours, minutes of sunlight diminish. It is during this time of darkness that we begin a new liturgical year. The season of Advent is upon us. Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. We prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World (John 8:12). The prophet Isaiah foretold this event when he wrote: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.* (Isaiah 9:2)

During this Advent season as we prepare for Christmas, I invite you to listen to Jesus, the Word of God and to be guided by the Word. As the Psalmist writes: *Your word is lamp unto my feet and light to my path.* (Ps 119:105)

There are many ways to listen to the Word. In our Catholic Schools the Word of God proclaimed, studied and discussed. I invite you, as I have invited everyone in the Archdiocese, to hear the Word of God in three ways:

1. To prepare a prayer space in your home or classroom where a Bible takes the place of honour;
2. To pray a simple prayer before and after meals. I will assist you in this by offering a biblical verse to help you to hear the Word of God. These are available through the parish Sunday bulletin.
3. To discuss the Sunday homily as a family.

With Christ as our guide, may you continue *to let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven* (Matt.5:16) during the Advent season and throughout the liturgical year.

I pray that you have a blessed Christmas!

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton