

**Homily**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - C**

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
November 27-28, 2021

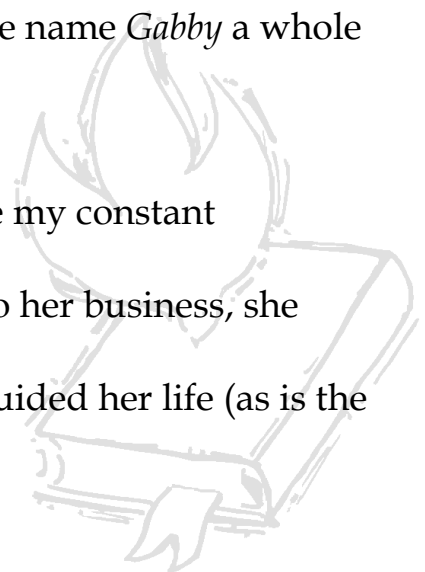
Jer 33: 14-16  
Ps 25: 4-5, 8-9, 10, 14  
1 Thes 3: 12 - 4: 2  
Lk 21: 25-28, 34-36

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Back in 2017 when the struggles I was fighting to protect children in the Church started taking its toll, staff thought it might be a good idea to get an outlet for myself so that I would have time to relax. My previous dog, Rusty Joe the troublemaker, had just passed away and the staff thought maybe getting another Basset hound would do the trick.

So on September 29<sup>th</sup> of that year (on the Feast of the Archangels), I drove down to Centralia, Illinois to collect a new gift from the world, a seven and a half pound Basset hound that I named Gabby. I was told by staff to name her after the archangel Gabriel instead my preference of Moses's wife Zipporah. I think my staff liked the name *Gabby* a whole lot better than the name *Zippy*.

From the day I picked her up, Gabby became my constant companion. She learned how to go outside to do her business, she learned that her nose was the appendage that guided her life (as is the



case with most bassets), she certainly learned how to beg for food and she learned how to play with everyone. I wanted a dog that was going to be gentle with anyone at when she came in contact (Rusty was a rescue dog – Rusty had issues with people of color, men, men with facial hair and anyone in a uniform. Once I came into the house dressed as St. Nicholas and I thought Rusty was going to attack me until he heard my voice and decided to change his mind...).

On the other hand, Gabby is just *Gabby*. Gabby likes to play with everybody. Forty kids can approach her at the same time and Gabby is in heaven – she just rolls on her back and lets all the kids rub her tummy, which is really the one thing she likes to have done more than anything else. When I lived with the Poor Clare’s on my forced sabbatical, Gabby used to chase the sisters so she could play with the rosary beads that hanged off their side. Currently, Gabby thinks she is my personal “Swiss Guard” for anyone who comes into the rectory where I am working – after her tails flails like a helicopter blade, she then rolls on her back to get her tummy rubbed.

When my father passed away on February 14<sup>th</sup>, Gabby turned into a

type of “therapy dog” to the members of my family, which means I do not get to spend as much time with my dog as I would like – I also promised my father that I would take care of his wife and son and Gabby seems to be doing the trick!

Last week, I was deep into Advent preparation and running out of time to finish what I needed to do. At those times, especially when I need to get work done, Gabby decides she needs more attention than the down times of the day. I think that God intends Gabby to serve as a metaphorical canine guardian angel to help me *slow* down, stop what I am doing, and appreciate the life that passes around me without me realizing how good that life is. Sometimes when I get too caught up in the day, doing this or doing that, all Gabby wants me to do is sit on the couch with her or sit on the patio and just “exist” together so that we can enjoy the sights together (and chase an occasional squirrel).

I very much appreciate that Gabby can recognize what sometimes I cannot – Gabby helps me stop and appreciate life. Sometimes I resign myself to the fact that Gabby wants to go to sleep and pressures me to go to sleep as well. So we engage in our nighttime routine – I chase

Gabby, I pick Gabby up, I put her in bed, I give Gabby her nightly snacks and then wait fifteen minutes until she falls asleep.

While Gabby begins drifting to sleep, I take the opportunity to pray the rosary – by the time I am finished, so is Gabby. I get my time to pray and help Gabby get her rest in the process. More importantly, what Gabby does for me is that she gives me a routine so that I can pray at night. I pray the rosary, I finish the rosary, Gabby is asleep and I am ready to do the same. This rest also gives me a chance to wake up a bit more refreshed early in the morning to start the day with prayer, paperwork and then the ministry that is set before me.

I have come to realize that I find it very beneficial to have that fifteen minutes at night to calm down, pray the rosary and reflect on all the folks who ask for prayers each day. This routine has meant all the difference in the world to this particular cleric.

A few weeks ago, I had preached about a penitent who walked into the confessional and the priest who offered that penitent one rosary after another, until the prayer became so ingrained in the person's life that the penitent could not stop thinking about the, Our Father, the Hail

Mary and the Glory Be – their prayer became their life and their life became their prayer.

I thought to myself in this season of Advent, in this season of preparation, we are supposed to take time to pray and realize what really is important in our life – the coming of Christ at his incarnation and the second coming of Christ on the last day, the day of judgment (or the *eschaton*). Our Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer the first two weeks or so in Advent focuses on those two comings of Christ – the first coming and Jesus in that nativity, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger because there was no room in the inn. We know that Jesus comes the second time on the day of judgment, when he will separate the sheep from the goats, the wheat from the chaff, and that Jesus will come to determine who has been living the Christian life and who has not.

To me, in my reflection, I also reflect on Christ's *third* coming, what St. John's gospel calls a type of "Realized Eschatology" – that God's presence is right here and right now. I come to realize that when I stop and if I give thanks, if I understand that God is with us *Emmanuel*, then I

understand that if we take time to spend with God, like we would do a friend or a spouse or someone really important to us, then we are building a relationship that will exist for the rest of our existence, in the here and now and on the last day, *por los siglos de los siglos*.

What I ask you to do every night during this Advent Season is to take fifteen minutes to build that relationship with God. In your bulletins, you will find all kinds of opportunities we will provide for you to build that relationship. On our parish website, I am offering two Advent reflections and the Christmas music I have written for your benefit. We are offering an *Angel Tree*, where the souls at our parishes remove tags from the tree with needs from our parishioners who have little to no means for Christmas gifts. We are participating in the Christmas Inc. free dinner program at St. Anne's, providing companionship for those who might be alone at Christmas.

We also are going to offer on December 8<sup>th</sup> at St. Anne's (at 6:00 p.m. following the Mass of the Immaculate Conception and on December 12<sup>th</sup> at St. Patrick's (at 2:00 p.m. following the Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass), a Christmas concert, courtesy of the RA Brass Quintet from St. Paul's

Church in Peotone. Two trumpets, a trombone, tuba and french horn will entertain us with secular and religious songs of Christmas. On those days, we also will be providing gift wrapping services for those who wish that type of help with their Christmas presents, hot chocolate, St. Nicholas for the kids and at time to bring the folks of our community together for just a nice time together.

Really, the best thing we can do in this Advent Season is *pray*. Pray the joyful mysteries of the rosary for the poor, the lonely, the sick and those who have died. Each Sunday night after my day of ministry, I drive to the Annunciation Monastery in Minooka to pray *seven* decades of the rosary and offer benediction for the benefit of all of you. The seven decades we pray are always the same each Sunday – the five joyful mysteries, an additional decade on the resurrection of Jesus and a final decade devoted to our Blessed Mother’s Assumption and Coronation as Queen of Heaven. The sisters and I pray this rosary for you – perhaps you and I can pray the joyful mysteries each night of Advent for the sisters and for the rest of the world who really needs these prayers.

I would like to conclude my homily by quoting Pope John Paul II, who, in his Apostolic Letter from 1994, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente (As the Third Millennium Draws Near)* best summarizes this constant presence of Christ in our lives, during the two great comings that we commemorate today and the third coming of Christ that is ever-present in our lives.

The Holy Father writes,

From this relationship of God with time there arises the duty to sanctify time. This is done, for example, when individual times, days or weeks are dedicated to God, as once happened in the religion of the old covenant and as happens still, though in a new way, in Christianity. In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil the celebrant, as he blesses the candle which symbolizes the risen Christ, proclaims: "Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, alpha and omega, all time belongs to him, and all the ages, to him be glory and power through every age forever." The meaning of this rite is clear: It emphasizes the fact that Christ is the Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his incarnation and resurrection, and thus become part of the "fullness of time."

May we always stand alert and be ready for Christ's ever-present coming into our lives. This is our prayer.



De esta relación de Dios con el tiempo nace *el deber de santificarlo*. Es lo que se hace, por ejemplo, cuando se dedican a Dios determinados tiempos, días o semanas, como ya sucedía en la religión de la Antigua Alianza, y sigue sucediendo, aunque de un modo nuevo, en el cristianismo. En la liturgia de la Vigilia pascual el celebrante, mientras bendice el cirio que simboliza a Cristo resucitado, proclama: « Cristo ayer y hoy, principio y fin, Alfa y Omega. Suyo es el tiempo y la eternidad. A El la gloria y el poder por los siglos de los siglos ». Pronuncia estas palabras grabando sobre el cirio la cifra del año en que se celebra la Pascua. El significado del rito es claro: evidencia que *Cristo es el Señor del tiempo*, su principio y su cumplimiento; cada año, cada día y cada momento son abarcados por su Encarnación y Resurrección, para de este modo encontrarse de nuevo en la « plenitud de los tiempos ».