

## FROM THE PASTOR SUNDAY, DEC. 2nd

In the second chapter of Acts of the Apostles (2:43-47), we find a description of the first Christian community, which came together in Jerusalem after the First Pentecost, described in Acts 2:1-13). The text describes this community as engaging in prayer, celebrating the Mass together, helping one another, and receiving the teaching of the Apostles.

Later in history, in the seventh canon of the Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.) the term "parish" was first used to describe such a community. The documents were written in Greek. The word used was *paroika*, derived from *para*, meaning "beside", and *oikos*, meaning "house".

Therefore, a parish was a church with a house for a resident priest to celebrate the sacraments regularly, as distinct from a chapel or shrine, which might be used only periodically. The Greek word *paroika* was translated into Latin as *paroecia*, which was Gallicized into the French *paroisse*, then contracted into the more familiar English, "parish".

Our Biblical and historical foundations serve as useful reminders to which we may return when seeking inspiration for living the faith in an often hostile world. Our ancestors point toward the ideals which we as disciples are called to pursue...yet, the details of their circumstances were quite different from ours, so we must take their example as a guide in constructing a life of faith in the contemporary world, just as they did in antiquity.

To that end, SLKF begins the new liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent, with a return to our spiritual roots. At the end of this letter, you will find a Prayer Commitment Form to assist you in two ways:

- (1) Examples of specific prayer/spiritual commitments you may choose to make this Advent Season, with space for you to write in something different should you so choose, and:
- (2) Space for you to write specific intentions for which you want the parish to pray (your name is not required, should you prefer anonymity).

The parish reciprocity will take place at all Christmas masses. A basket with all the cards will be placed in the sanctuary, and a prayer of offering will be made at each Christmas mass at the conclusion of the General Intercessions.

This form may be removed, and returned in the collection baskets after you fill it out. We ask that you make your decisions and return them by Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup>.

For my part, I commit to read *On the Duties of the Clergy*, by St. Ambrose. Saint Ambrose was the Bishop of Milan who converted Saint Augustine from the Manichean heresy, and later baptized him as a Christian. For anyone interested, this work is in three parts, the text is available online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3401.htm>

St. Louis King of France, Pray for us.