

# 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT [B], 2017

DECEMBER 2-3, 2017

QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA

Rev. Jeff McGowan

**1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ISAIAH 63: 16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7**

Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways

**PSALM 80**

Rouse your power and come to save us.

**2<sup>ND</sup> READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1;3-9**

God is faithful and by Him you were called to fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**GOSPEL: MARK 13:33-37**

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A professor was invited to speak at a military base and was met at the airport by a soldier named Josh. As they headed toward the baggage claim area, Josh kept going off—once to help an older woman with her suitcase, once to help an overwhelmed mom by lifting up two toddlers so they could see Santa on TV, and again to stop and give someone directions. The bags would of course be slow coming, so there was no hurry. The professor was impressed. He asked the soldier, “Where did you learn to live like that?” “During my time in Iraq,” Josh said. He explained, they never knew when there would be an IED explosive planted on the roads they drove through. He saw good friends die right before his eyes. I never knew whether the next bump in the road would be my last. “I learned that you have to live before you die. So I had to get every good I could out of every moment over there and I just keep that attitude.”

Back in the 1900s when I was young, I considered death more a theory than a concern. That battle-tested soldier Josh is wise for his years. We can make his attitude our attitude. Whether we speak literally or figuratively, the next bump in the road could be our last.

We want to take every opportunity to live as Jesus taught by reaching out in love to help our neighbors.

The idea of expressing love is treated by many like the book we have been meaning to read or the phone call we intend to make or the Christmas decorations we've been meaning to get down from the attic. Our will is genuine, our intentions are good, but there are always good reasons why we don't accomplish it.

Some things should not be put off. A spouse who needs you to listen to what happened needs you to listen now even if it is a great game; a child who comes running to us for a hug or lavish exclamations of praise needs it now, not when we are in a better mood. When a friend requires you to stand with him to face the school bully, it's not about convenience. When someone we love needs reassurance we don't want to put it off for any reason. Love is a commitment that assures we will be there when we are needed. The feeling that there might be a more convenient time to love has caused many people a lifetime of regret.

Thank God our lives are not as tragic as soldiers in a war, but we *don't know* the day or the hour when the Lord will come. We *can* live every moment like that young soldier with kindness, generosity, courage and faith. This year is a special year for each one of us; it's the year we decide to prepare the way for the coming of our Christ; it's our opportunity to adjust our attitudes as needed so the good news will take us every step of the journey ahead.