



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Cardinal
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

November 29, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May the grace and peace of the Lord Jesus be with you!

During Advent the Church throughout the world waits in joyful expectation for the return of her Savior in glory. The prayer of the Church reminds us that "...we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ our Lord will come again in his glory" (Preface for Advent).

In his first Letter to the Thessalonians Saint Paul says to us: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing" (1 Thes 5: 16-17). Prayer is truly essential to the Christian life and the key to observing this holy season of Advent in a worthy manner. The saintly Curé of Ars, John Marie Vianney, wrote in his *Catechism on Prayer*: "Prayer is the source of all graces, the mother of all virtues and the universal way by which God wills that we should come to Him".

I encourage you to maintain a spirit of prayer during the days of Advent. Amidst the many responsibilities, anxieties and concerns which you face each day, turn to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to fill you with His strength and peace. I assure all of you, dear friends, of my own prayerful support in Christ Jesus.

Sincerely yours,

+Justin Card. Rigali

Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia

[Please communicate this letter in an appropriate manner to the faithful on the weekend of November 28-29, 2009]