

## *The Second Sunday of Advent* *December 8, 2019*

*“Thomas said to him, ‘Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’”*  
(John 14:5-6)

As we continue our preparation for the coming of our Lord at Christmas, let us take a look at the journey we are on. A journey of any kind must have a clear direction from start to finish. There must be a route to follow if we are to reach the destination. How easy is it to become lost on the way? How easy is it to stay within sight of the familiar, always lingering close to home? Remember, “A journey begins with a single step.” This journey we are on to find Christ is no different.

There is an old sailor’s proverb that may shed some light for us on our way. It reads, *“He who is enslaved to the compass has the freedom of the seas; the rest must sail close to the shoreline.”* I chose this to start our reflection today because it has profound implications for our journey. How can the restriction that the compass brings lead us to freedom? What does sailing close to the shoreline mean for us on this journey? I will attempt to explain as we proceed.

The compass has long been the trusted companion of the mariner as he plies the oceans of the world. Every school child knows that there are four main points on the compass: North, South, East and West. The mariner must also keep in mind that at certain points on the globe, there is a difference between



*“True North”* and *“Magnetic North.”* Let me provide an illustration to explain what this means to the sailor. Imagine yourself standing at the middle of a clock face where the hands are attached. Focus First on the 12 o’clock position. Look slightly to your right at the 2 o’clock position. The misalignment of the compass between *“True North”* and *“Magnetic North”* grows wider as you move from the center and if not corrected

will find the ship lost at sea, drifting aimlessly.

Sacred Scripture is the *“True North”* on our spiritual compass. It is the source of the direction for our Christian lives. The pressures of life and the world can be likened to *“Magnetic North”*, leading us away from the intended destination. Only by prayer and study of God’s Word can our spiritual compass maintain proper adjustment to help us reach the safe harbor of the Christ life. In John’s Gospel, Jesus told his Apostles, *“I am the way and the truth and the life . . .”* Jesus, the Word of God, is our compass, our truth and the freedom of life more abundant.

For the Christian, seeking to grow in faith, sailing close to the shoreline can be the fear of stepping out in faith to follow God’s compass. The shoreline may be the bliss of not taking chances. The shoreline may represent the easy way. It may be the comfort we find in something that is within our grasp. If we fall back on something we have *“always done that way,”* we are only chasing the shoreline, afraid to venture into the deep water of our spiritual life. If we chose to only follow the shoreline, we will always be looking behind us, instead ahead to freedom.

As we continue our journey during this time of Advent, let us keep Sacred Scripture ever before us as our compass. Only then can we reach the goal of our desire, the light that Christ brings at Christmas.