THE BANNERS

 Some people asked if I would explain in writing what I had said about the banners in the sanctuary. I didn’t realize that I needed to explain the banners until I heard that someone had thought they had been put up backwards for Advent.

The Green Banners:

 These banners are based on several scripture passages: Ezekiel 47:1-6,12; Revelation 22:1-2; and John 19: 33-34.

 John is drawing on the Ezekiel passage when he uses the image of blood and water flowing from the side of Christ ~ who is the “New temple.” Blood and water are symbolic of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism. So the life-giving water or the living water flowing from the side of Christ symbolizes the water of baptism, by which we were united to Christ and began sharing His life. Use the image of the river (blue) to draw you into your baptism, in which His life was poured out and given to you through baptism.

The Purple Banners:

 Advent. During the Advent season we are celebrating the long wait through Jewish history for the coming of the messiah (Jesus), and now we are waiting for His coming in the fullness of time. This is expressed through the lines at the top of the banners pointing to Jesus; the bottom lines flow from Him, all history was leading up to His coming; and the lines leading away pointing toward the future, when history/creation will reach its fulfillment in Him. Jesus is the focal point of all time and all history. In Him we find the meaning of human history and also the meaning of our life/ history.

 Lent. In Lent the banners are reversed, so that the lines encircle the body/image of Jesus. This is the image of His love for us, in giving His life on the cross. The bottom lines also point to the tabernacle, or the gift of Jesus of Himself to us in the Eucharist. To receive Jesus in the Eucharist is to receive or share in His sacrificial love expressed in His sacrifice on the cross. Let it deepen your awareness of the love Jesus offers you in the gift of Himself in the Eucharist.

The White Banners:

 These banners are used for both Christmas and Easter. White and gold are meant to be symbols of life and joy.

 Easter. The church celebrates Easer for seven weeks ~ to convey to us that Easter is not a past event, but a very real event now. That Jesus is alive and present among us. “I am with you until the end of time.” The church uses the color of white during this season to celebrate the victory of Jesus over darkness and sin, life over death, joy over sadness, love over hate. These banners are meant to convey joy and life. Eucharistic symbols of wheat and grapes are meant to help us in realizing the living presence of Jesus given to us in the Eucharistic bread and wine ~ the real and divine body and blood of Christ.

 Christmas. The church also uses white during the Christmas season to celebrate Jesus’ coming into the world. The words of John’s Gospel, “The light came into the world and darkness has not overcome it.” Jesus is the light of the world. So during a dark and dreary season of winter, white and gold are used to be a source of joy and hope ~ so that we are never overcome by the darkness of sin and evil.

 I would ask that you try to allow yourself to be drawn into the images for which the banners were designed. Each set can draw us into a closer relationship with Jesus, who is the focal point of the banners.

 I wish you all a long and blessed journey to the fullness of what God desires for each of you. Farewell,

 *Fr. Dave*