



By Pat Haggerty

I must admit, I am a Starbucks kind of girl. I love the richness of their coffees and their unique flavors. At this time of year, they have a special menu of holiday drinks---eggnog latte, gingerbread latte and holiday spice flat white, to name a few. My favorite is the holiday spice flat white.

I got to thinking about the additional coffees offered by Starbucks. This holiday menu concept is not just theirs alone. Other restaurants do the same! This is a season of specialties and holiday-themed foods, drinks and activities. We are entering a season of Christmas cookies, fruitcake, stollen, and French meat pies (tourtière). It is a wonderful time!

However, pause for a moment---what will you be adding to your spiritual menu for this season of Advent and Christmas? Will you be doing anything differently? I hope so! Now is the time to plan. Take a look at your current spiritual practices and consider what you could do that would enhance the season in a spiritual way. Make this intentional and purposeful. I am not just referring to an Advent calendar or an Advent wreath. Though, that would be nice. I am suggesting something unique to you.

If you enjoy music, immerse yourself in the music of the season: learn new hymns, listen to new artists, plan a “Lessons and Carols”. There is no better version of “Mary, Did you Know?” than the Pentatonix rendition. It is captivating. If you aren’t familiar with David Haas’ “Song of the Stable”, you should check it out. It is my all-time favorite. If you are a You Tube fan, watch and listen to Loreena McKennitt’s “In the Bleak Midwinter”. It is inspiring.

If you love reading, find a copy of Tomie dePaola's *Christmas Remembered*. It is a book for all ages in which he recounts many of his Christmases past. Quite charming! Perhaps you will be reading to young children.

*The Nativity*

illustrated by Julie Vivas is beautiful. It pairs biblical text with Vivas's beautiful drawings. Tasha Tudor's

*Take Joy*

is an older publication but contains a lovely collection of traditional stories, poems and songs. Her illustrations are heart-warming.

I hope these ideas assist you in your planning for the season of Advent. Certainly, nothing will compare to your prayer-life and your daily spiritual exercises. You will find joy and strength in the word of God. Perhaps you will turn to some of the Advent companions and supplements offered through Bayard and other publishers.

Whatever you do, I wish you a happy and peace-filled Advent journey. In the meantime, I extend my thanks to all of you for being a part of my Assumption family, for being co-travelers on our spiritual path leading to the One who is our Light.