

OUR ROOTS

The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was (what is called) a defining moment. Another such defining moment was the attack on September 11, 2001. A “defining moment” could be defined as a moment that drastically changes the lives of those affected. American life has not been the same after either one of those catalytic events. Our lives are not what they might have been otherwise.

Most times it is an individual or two, rather than an event that makes a difference. The same is true in the life of the Church, as the Assembly of Believers. The prime example is Jesus, whose birth we prepare to celebrate. The very reason for Christ’s breaking into history was to make a difference, - to be a catalyst for change, if you will. Whether or not it happens and, if it does, to what extent, depends on other agents that He employs, namely you and me.

During Thanksgiving week, Dr. Matthew Bunson made a welcome visit to our Diocese. He is the author of a number of works, including [Apostle of the Alleghenies](#) and a pictorial history of our Diocesan Church. Dr. Bunson’s presence reminded me of those individuals who have been the catalysts for growth within our Local Church, defining our journey into the Lord’s Reign. Foremost among these, of course, is the Servant of God Demetrius A. Gallitzin, the Apostle of the Alleghenies.

If it were not for the Reverend Prince, would we be a different Church than we are today? What would have been the forces that might have influenced the way that you and I would now be living out our Faith? We can only guess. Obviously, the Lord’s providence allowed it to be what it is, because of the agent that He chose, namely, a man of noble birth who gave up an earthly kingdom in order to be about the Heavenly Kingdom.

The pictorial diocesan history traces our journey over more than two centuries to the present day. It records for us and future generations successive milestones of our journey as a People of God. Without any one of those chapters in our diocesan history, we would be different today. However, the lot that is ours is the one chosen by the Lord. Let us not forget those who have brought us to this day, the ones that were the Lord’s catalysts and agents in their own day.

So that we do not forget and so that future generations will also know, I take the liberty of suggesting two very fine Christmas gifts for you to give your children and grandchildren, - perhaps, even yourself. Those are the two books mentioned above, which can be obtained through our diocesan offices in Hollidaysburg or the Gallitzin Chapel House in Loretto. They will help our younger generations to get in touch with our roots as a Church.

The Season of Advent is designed to do exactly that. It is a time set aside to reflect on who and what it is that we have been called to be by the Anointed One of God. And, so, we are challenged to do penance and reform our lives in order to make a difference in ourselves and allow the Lord to make a difference through us in the world around us. It is appropriate that we do so before our celebration of Christmas. Otherwise, we will simply go through the motions rather than entering into the very mystery of the Almighty Lord becoming one of us. It is an awesome reality! Will this Advent be a “defining moment” for you?