

Amateur radio - also called Ham Radio - is the use of designated radio frequencies for private recreation, non-commercial messages, wireless experimentation, self-training, and emergency communication.

I got into Ham Radio about 20 years ago. Back then I spent a lot of time studying for license requirements, buying and selling radio equipment at swap meets - sort of high-tech flea markets, and of course tweaking and tuning the equipment to make contact around the world.

There is an awful lot about amateur radio that is pretty unintelligible to the average person - HT, OSCARS, RTTY. While some of it sounds vaguely familiar - AM, FM, Morse code, packet.

There are virtually an infinite number of frequencies available for sending and receiving; as well as any number of ways to encode a signal for communication.

But in order to effectively communicate, two stations both need to be on the same frequency ... at the same time ... and operating in the same mode.

Otherwise, a message may end up sounding like nothing more than beeps, blips, and static - or even worse, there may be no one out there listening.

In the First Reading, we hear the beautiful poetry of the prophet Isaiah speaking of the day of the LORD when the Messiah would transform the world. The reading ends by saying that the Messiah would be, *set up as a signal for the nations*, and that *the [nations] shall seek [Him] out*.

As Christians, we apply this text to Jesus Christ. It was written 700 years before His birth - proclaiming that the Messiah - Jesus - would be a signal for all people - who would seek Him out.

But in order to receive this “signal” as Isaiah refers to Our Lord - we must ensure that we are present to receive Him ... tuned to the right frequency ... and receiving according to the proper mode.

During this season of Advent, it is important that we make a solid effort to seek out Jesus - through prayer, fasting, Scripture, good works, and especially in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. We may find that we need to “tweak” our habitual ways of living or thinking or acting - in order to more properly “tune in” to the “signal” - in the person of Jesus Christ.

We live in a time of great grace - because we are able to see and hear the words and works of Jesus lived out over twenty-one centuries of Christian history. Let us use this Season of Grace - this Advent - as a time to see and hear the Gospel message with new eyes and new ears - and allow ourselves to be renewed in Christ Jesus our Lord.