

1st Sunday of Advent

Today we begin the season of Advent, and with this, we begin the new liturgical year. On this day, the church invites us to be ready and prepared to receive the Lord. Advent means, waiting and we wait eagerly for someone we love, we care and we are ready to spend our time on him. In the liturgical calendar, the season of Advent means a joyful waiting, a waiting for someone with love. Here we wait for Jesus and there is the eagerness within us to receive him as we look forward to this great event of God becoming man. During this season, we anticipate and wait for the coming of our Jesus.

There are three aspects of Jesus' coming into the world. We look at the past as we anticipate the celebration of the birth of Jesus in History that took place 2024 years ago. Secondly, we look to the present as we prepare ourselves to receive him in our daily lives. We accept him in the Word and in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Finally we look into the future and await his coming at the end of times in majesty and glory to judge the world. We wait for Jesus, as his coming contains promise, love, preparation, alertness, prayer, new beginnings and fulfillment.

Since the coming of the Son of Man will be a time of judgment, the Gospel calls for repentance and service. Because the final end is generally spoken of in the future tense, the feeling is that, there is still plenty of time to prepare and that there is nothing to get excited about here and now. Luke argues against that attitude. No human being knows when the final end will take place and the Son of Man will appear. So, we must be prepared for this possibility at all times. Each day should be lived as if it were the last. The emphasis here is on preparedness and not on undue anxiety. What Jesus tells us is that if we are prepared every day for this event, we need not fear the Day of Judgment. If we are loyal and faithful to our Christian vocation, our end on earth will not be an end but the beginning of our new life in Heaven.

Jesus stated that all the signs mentioned during today's Gospel reading were to be fulfilled before the passing away of the generation that lived in his days. All the tasks, we

humans embrace have an ending. Jesus calls us all to be on our guard, so our hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, so the day of the Lord will not catch us unexpectedly, and as well in unprepared manner. No one knows when the end will come. We should be prepared at all times. Therefore during the coming days, let us embrace a spiritual attitude so the Season of Advent may become something special for us. May Advent be a true moment of preparation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, at death, or at the last coming of the Lord, which ever may come first? Our prayers are that, each and every one of us, as we personally strive to achieve this holy objective for the glory of God.

Thus, Jesus gives us the warning: Watch at all times and pray. He does not want us to be caught unprepared. On his part, Jesus gives us a very positive warning and the guiding step for our salvation. The Christian who listens to the words of Jesus, lives in permanent expectation of his coming and will welcome him.

He tells us that the occasion to take things seriously with a positive attitude to life is now. Secondly, to be watchful each day, through prayer and reflection that the salvation is here and now. We need to thank God for all that Jesus has brought and continues to bring into our lives, the countless helps, guidance to lead a good life and as the Gospel tells us to escape all tribulations. So, let us do our best by constantly being aware of his presence and action in the people around us.

We are helped in our journey of life by so many people, most of whom we do not know, have never seen. Our waiting for Jesus is a moment of joy and expectation and not a tension filled situation. If we can help the little babe of Bethlehem at Christmas with a sincere and open heart, expressing gratitude for all that he has given us and remaining sorry for the hurt we have placed on to others, we can trust and hope that the second and glorious coming of Christ will not be for us a tragedy but a fulfillment of all hopes. Therefore here in the season of Advent let us live by faith, walk in hope and be renewed in love so that when Jesus comes at the end time to be our judge, we shall not just know him, but come to him as a friend.