

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B 2020

Happy New Year to you all. Today is New Year's Day for the Catholic Church! Having ended Liturgical year A, we now begin Liturgical year B. It's a time for a fresh start; a time to wipe our slates clean; a time to start all over again! Most people make resolutions on New Year's Day. What will our resolve be for this Advent season and the New Year?

Advent is a time of waiting for the Lord's coming. (Not yet Christmas) Advent is a holy season of hopes and expectations which the faithful will not see fulfilled entirely until Christ comes back in His glory. Of course, Jesus came, He continues to come and He will come again. So do we recognize Him and perceive His presence in the events of our life? The readings of this season invite us to be vigilant and attentive, to be ready to receive the Lord who is coming to free us from our sins.

Today's 1st reading is a desperate prayer for God to come and save His people. Prophet Isaiah prays for God's active presence in the Jewish community so that they may remain faithful to their God. God to them is a Father and a redeemer. Isaiah thus prayed to Yahweh, the Father of the Chosen People, for His intervention, for His mercy. This prayer was answered when the Son of God, the redeemer Jesus became man in the Incarnation whose memory we are preparing to celebrate.

In the Second Reading, St. Paul tells the Corinthians that Christ will come soon, and so they should maintain the right disposition as Christians during every moment of their lives. They should not misuse their gifts and charisms thus remaining ill-prepared for Christ's Second Coming. He is also telling all of us to strive to make ourselves ready for the day of our Lord. As baptized children of God, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to keep us alert and watchful.

Today's gospel tells us that the redeemer, the Son of man is coming to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy but one has to be vigilant to be able to receive His salvation. The one who sleeps will remain a slave to sin and thus not be ransomed or saved.

Jesus in today's Gospel has warned us to be vigilant. "Be watchful! Be alert! We do not know when the Lord of the house is coming. May He not come suddenly and find us sleeping." Jesus summarizes the complexities of Christian living in these words; "Be alert, stay awake."

The Church invites us on this first Sunday of Advent to prepare for Christ's 2nd Coming, first by getting ready to properly celebrate the fond memory of His first coming 2000 years ago. Secondly, by experiencing Christ's daily advent or coming to us in the Eucharistic celebrations. Let us always think about His Second Coming which, for us, may happen at the hour of our death or at the final end of time.

Advent calls us to prepare for Christ's return and motivates us as Isaiah pointed out in the first reading today, to do right and be mindful of God in our ways. If we are awake and ready, the coming of the Son of Man will be an event greeted with joy, if not then it will be a time of wailing. Thus, our whole life should be a preparation to meet our Master and Lord Jesus as we continue to build His kingdom. May you all have a fruitful Advent season. Amen.