

First Sunday of Advent

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Dear Friends,

Advent has us look backward so we can look forward. Both views call us to live in the present with hope for a new day.

The Old Testament prophets, especially, Isaiah and Jeremiah, have a clear and strong message of hope that we recall at this time of Advent. Today, Jeremiah, calls out from the darkness and despair of the Exile, ***“The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah.”*** (Jer 33:14)

Luke’s message today and in this time of Advent is based on the fundamental confidence flowing from the Christian message. Christ will return in glory and with him will come the fullness of redemption. A new day is coming. Luke is emphatic: we need to be ready. ***“And then you will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise our heads because your redemption is at hand.”*** (Lk 21:27-28)

This longing for the return of the Lord mirrors the passionate longing expressed in the Prophets. Yet it is incredibly enriched and supported by our gift of the Gospel reality. The second coming is better understood as the completion of the redemption that Christ has already begun. So we join together in our liturgies and in our lives to proclaim the Advent yearning: ***Come Lord Jesus!***

In the meanwhile, Jeremiah (Jer 33:14-16), Paul (1 Thes 3”12-4:2) and Luke have a clear and simple message for us. Live today in faithfulness to the Lord. Enter into our reality. We do not know the future but we do know the present. We are called to live the Gospel with acts of mercy and forgiveness, with concern for justice and peace. In the constant struggle Paul encourages us with these words ***“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all...at the coming of our Lord Jesus.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> Thes 3L12)

Advent challenges us to look at the lost opportunities, the time wasted and misdirected. We all have more than enough to account for. Advent calls us to gather ourselves together and live today, in the grace of the present moment, for tomorrow is in God’s hands. We indeed need to cry out, ***Come Lord Jesus!*** But a life seeking to walk with Jesus right now makes our cry all the more real and focused.

God is very capable of keeping the schedule. He will do his job of finishing the program at the appropriate time. It is quite normal for us to use that familiar question of our youth, Are we there yet? God will let us know. In the meanwhile, our task is to be faithful to the Gospel message and express the hunger in our heart for a new day with the beautiful Advent prayer, ***Come Lord Jesus!***

In Christ,

*Fr. Tracy O' Sullivan O. Carm*