

**Alleluia, alleluia. Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation. Alleluia.**

Luke 21:25-28,34-36

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

'But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

With Advent, we begin a new year (Year C) during which we will listen to Luke's Gospel. Luke wrote his gospel between 70-80AD for a non-Jewish audience i.e. pagans who had become Christians. Throughout his gospel he emphasizes God's love and mercy; the necessity for prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

“The essential attitude for the faithful is one of unflinching watchfulness: standing ready, rejecting the evil actions of darkness, staying alert thanks to constant prayer.” - Luke, more than any other evangelist, stresses that prayer must be interwoven constantly throughout our lives - “As the Eucharist proclaims the death of Christ until he comes again, so to watch and pray is to hasten the coming of God's kingdom. We already stand erect holding our heads high, as our watching and our prayer identify the one for whom we await – the Son of Man.”

(The Glenstal Missal – First Sunday of Advent)

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Year C

1st December 2024

To Appear Before the Son of Man



Advent is a rich season when we prepare not just for Christmas, when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; but when we also direct our minds and hearts to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. It is the Lord's 'Second Coming' that is at the centre of this Sunday's readings, the First Sunday of Advent.

Opening Prayer

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem in the years prior to the Babylonian exile 628 - 586 BC., warning the people of God's displeasure at their lives, calling them to turn back to God. However, today's short passage is by a later prophet which has been included in Jeremiah's work. It tells of Israel's hope for the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of God's kingdom.

“However, is the 'virtuous Branch' in this reading Christ, or ourselves, his kingdom? We have no business to look forward vapidly to Christmas during Advent unless it is to mean a renewal and strengthening in our lives of the rule of God. In relation to this reading there is room not to congratulate ourselves cosily on the coming of Christ but to ask ourselves how near or far we still are from being the city whose name is 'The Lord – our – integrity'.”
(The Sunday Word - Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB)

Psalm 24(25):4-5,8-9,10,14

O LORD, make me know your ways. Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation.

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he shows the way to sinners. He guides the humble in right judgement; to the humble he teaches his way.

All the LORD's paths are mercy and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and commands. The LORD's secret is for those who fear him; to them he reveals his covenant.

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Brothers and sisters: May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Finally, then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians is one of the earliest letters he wrote (50 AD) just 20 years after the life and ministry of Jesus. There is a sense of urgency as Paul sees the return of Christ as imminent. Therefore, he encourages the early Christians to be full of love in readiness to greet the Lord when he returns. This is no mere, cosy feeling of warmth, but it is a practical call to generosity, sharing - a readiness to help and serve one another. In doing this, the people will live holy, blameless lives, giving good example to all. Let us hear Paul's call afresh this Advent and prepare to greet the Lord, by living generous lives, considerate and caring for all.

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make, gathered from among your gifts to us, and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.

Prayer after Communion

May these mysteries, O Lord, in which we have participated profit us, we pray, for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures.