

**First Sunday of Advent** - (begin Year "C" of Lectionary) by *Father Dave*

The Season of Advent is a time of waiting for Christ, allowing Him to be reborn in our lives. It is also a time for purifying our hearts by repentance and for renewing our lives by reflecting on and experiencing the several comings (or additional Advents) of Christ into our lives. Besides His first coming at His birth, Jesus comes to our lives through the Sacraments (especially the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist / Communion), through the Word of God / Holy Scripture, through the worshipping community, at the moment of our death, and finally in His Second Coming at the end of the world when He judges the world.

The Scripture readings for this weekend are all short. The first, from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, speaks a mouthful. In that selection, the prophet Jeremiah waits and hopes for an ideal descendant of King David who will bring security and justice to God's people. Christians believe that Jeremiah's waiting and hoping were fulfilled in Jesus. He assures us that *the Lord our justice* will fulfill His promises, and, therefore, we need not be afraid in spite of the frightening events and moral degradation all around.

From Psalm 25 we hear expressed the central idea of patient and prayerful waiting for the Lord, asking Him to make known His ways to us, to guide us, and to teach us. In the brief selection from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, Paul gives instructions about how Christians should conduct themselves as they wait for *"the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His holy ones."* We are advised to *"strengthen our hearts in holiness,"* and to *"abound in love for one another."*

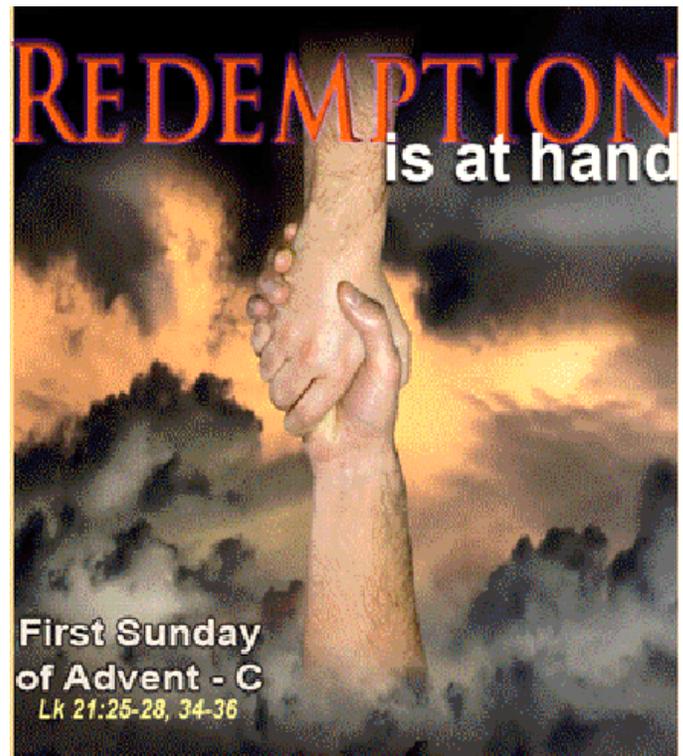
Jesus, in the selection from Luke's Gospel, prophesies the signs and portents that will accompany His Second Coming, and He encourages us to be expectant, optimistic, vigilant and well-prepared. *"When these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your hands because your redemption is at hand."* Jesus wants us to face the future with confidence in God's providence.

And so, as we prepare for the celebration of Christmas with gift shopping, baking, sending greeting cards, cleaning and decorating our homes, we are also reminded of the importance of preparing our inner selves for Christ's second coming. We do this preparation by allowing Him to be reborn daily in our lives. Advent is the time for us to make this preparation by repenting for our many sins, by renewing our lives through prayer and penance and by sharing our blessings with others. Advent also provides an opportunity for us to check for what needs to be put right in our lives – aligning our thinking and acting to God's ways of thinking and acting (as opposed to the ways of the world).

While Jesus warns us to be ready for the end of the world, as to the day or the hour – that is not ours to know.

It is not healthy for us to be so preoccupied with the future that we fail to live fully in the present. Indeed, the only true preparation for the coming Kingdom of God is to be living the kind of life that God wants us to live. In our lives of mercy and compassion, of justice with peace, of reconciliation and self-sacrifice, the Kingdom can already be experienced. In the midst of pain, of struggle, of human frailty and hostility, when those who are disciples follow Jesus' path of selfless-living, the Son of Man comes with liberation and healing. Living like this will mean that we have nothing to fear, no matter what the future will bring. If we live as God teaches, we will be familiar with the One Who saves and have no reason to fear His coming at the end of time. If we live in the present as God asks, the future will take care of itself.

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World  
& for Peace



## REFLECTION by Father Rody

NOV 28, 2021...1<sup>ST</sup> SUN OF ADVENT...LK 21; 25-28, 34-36

Today we start with the new liturgical season of the church, Advent. What is advent?

- Latin: adventus = English: coming (Greek: Parousia)...double meaning of the coming of the Son of God; **second coming** for our redemption and the **first coming** His being born like us except sin.

- There are four weeks represented by four candles; #1 purple (hope), #2 purple (faith), #3 pink (joy-Gaudete Sunday), #4 purple (peace) and “white candle at the middle: Dec. 25” (***5<sup>th</sup> candle is a variation***).

- Advent wreath...green=life and circle=unending love of God for mankind.

With this background, **Luke on verse 28** *“But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.”* This is advent...*our redemption is at hand*. Thus, why be disturbed if it is our redemption and not our destruction? Isn't that wonderful that we still have time to prepare to meet our Savior? Let us then keep in mind that Advent is not something to be afraid of...that it is asking us to be happy because the Savior will be like us except sin...that we may be fully aware of ‘*created after the image and likeness*’ for we will see in person with whom we are modeled from, and lastly this is not about sumptuous food neither fancy clothes.

Since advent is to prepare for the coming of our Savior...to be with us...stay with us...mingle with us...where will He stay so that we can enjoy His company? Can we prepare our heart and offer to Him as His simple abode? Let us then make space in our heart...we remove our anxieties, fears, worldly aspirations just to have enough space for Him and Him alone should stay in that space (*no other board mates please*). The act of making a space for Him is also the best gift we can give Him on His birthday.