

First Sunday of Advent Year A. 27th November 2022. We must be prepared

Today, the Church celebrates the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of the Church's liturgical year. Advent is a borrowed word from Latin *Adventus*, meaning arrival, appearance, or coming.

Traditionally, Catholic Church considered advent a period of penitence and fasting to prepare for the holy day, that's why we use purple as a liturgical color just as in the Lenten period. However, the Roman observance has always contained an element of joyful anticipation of Christmas, and in the western churches today it's expressed by Advent calendars, lighting an Advent wreath, praying an Advent daily devotional, erecting a Christmas tree, as well as other ways of preparing for Christmas, such as setting up Christmas decorations in churches and at homes.

Originally Advent was seen as a time of preparation for the feast of Christ's nativity. But during the Middle Ages this meaning was extended to include preparation for Christ's second coming, *Greek- Parousia*: as well as Christ's present coming through grace.

Having established this, we can say that Advent calls Christians to reflect on both the birth of Jesus and on the Second Coming of Christ. Therefore, our readings today are geared towards the second coming as well as the nativity. The psalmist proclaimed, let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord. Advent is celebrated with physical symbols, they're to reflect our inner actions, the flowers reflect the love of God for humanity, the candles, represents the light of Christ that enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and our sin.

The central message today is preparation. St. Paul admonished us to wake up from our sleep our salvation is near, the fact that the sun rises in the morning and set in the evening, it is an indication that our days are passing by. Many Christians are carried away by the joys of this life, therefore, have little or no time to reflect on the fact that our lives are short in this world. Sooner or later, we shall all leave this world just as we once came into the world with nothing.

The gospel reading Jesus, said to his disciples " As it in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the son of Man." In the days of Noah, people focused on the things of the world that give only temporal joys, while neglecting the precepts of God; Noah who serves as a mediator, called people to repentance and warned them against the coming floods, but they laughed and make jest of him; went about their normal life drinking eaten, married and giving in marriage. Noah's message is replicated to us here today. We all have the duty to return to Christ and listen to his message through the ministers of the church, do not harden our hearts like the people in the time of Noah. It is important to prepare daily for the fact that we do not know the day not the hour the son of Man will arrive.

As we begin this Advent, let us take it with seriousness and in sincerity of hearts. Let us conduct ourselves properly; avoid the occasions of sin, namely, the sin of pride, negligence, laziness, bitterness and desire of the flesh; and increase our commitment in the reception of the church's Sacraments, most especially; the Eucharist food for our journey and Penance which aid us to have a true communion with Jesus. Have a Blessed Advent!

Fr. Jingbe Simon