

2022 A 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent Nov. 27

“What does the word Advent mean?” asked a young Woman. The RCIA leader responded, **“Advent means coming.”** Then added: **“Advent is the time we prepare for the coming of the Lord at Christmas.** He arrives as a tiny babe who is the Savior of the World., King of the Universe, and the Incarnate Son of God, His Father.”

**Another important aspect of Advent is to turn believers’ hearts and minds towards our future when Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead.”** A good word to describe **Advent is expectation.** Christ is coming now and will come again at the end of time.

**Hope** is one of the three theological virtues. Hope helps us to the non-static, future orientation of Advent and unfolds its liturgical & biblical orientation.

Isaiah in Ch. 2 today, is giving us a beautiful view from the top of God’s Holy mountain, a view of hope, of God’s plan to restore God’s chosen people someday, to bring peace and justice to the nations through God’s anointed One, the Messiah.

He also has a vision of people from every nation coming together to worship God, learn about God and live according to God’s laws. He also sees people who are so motivated to be in God’s presence that they look like an upward flowing stream of humanity, climbing up the mountain to reach God.

Imagine for a moment a stream of water flowing up a mountain. Impossible, you say. The law of gravity makes it nearly impossible for water to flow uphill.

But it takes a powerful force of nature, like heavy ice plates or an earthquake to defy the pull of gravity and move water uphill. In the same way, it takes **the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and minds to inspire us to turn from our selfish, sinful ways and seek God’s ways.** This is the vision of the future that Isaiah announces.

As we enter this Advent season today, we are met not with the twinkling lights and the festive feel of the secular version of this season but with the hard truth. It reminds of what it means to believe in a Savior who entered the world as a babe in a manger and dies on the cross, and will come at the end.

Paul in his letter to Romans says, "It is the hour now for you to stay awake from sleep. Our salvation is near. The day is at hand." **"Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light."** Let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh."

We all like olives. They are a very important part of our food. One of the important parts of the olive is oil. It is used in cooking, in health products. It is also used as fuel. You get olive oil out of the olive seeds by crushing them and separate the oil from all the yucky stuff.

Like the olives, we have to get rid of the yucky stuff of ourselves before Jesus can use us. What is the yucky stuff of ourselves called? Sin: Pride, anger, bitterness, lust, envy, gluttony, and sloth.

It is one way to get ready for Jesus to come and dwell in and with us is to get rid of our sins. But unlike olives, that have to be crushed, we can get rid of our sins by seeing in what area we got so yucky, then, repent and confess our sins and get reconciled with the Lord and our brothers and sisters and walk in the light of Christ.

What is the first thing God created in the world? Light. What is the thing that will indicate the presence of God is among us and in us? According to the book of Revelation it is the light.

The advent season is our chance to remember, to celebrate, to announce to the world that the Messiah has come and that we have been called to walk in the light of Christ. And as we walk in God's light we will choose justice, and peace because through Jesus we have been restored to God and restored to one another.

For these next four weeks leading up to Christmas, I hope that you will focus how you can heal from any separation between you and God and between you and your brothers and sisters in every race and creed that you share more of Jesus' light and life with a world that needs so badly to know God's hope and peace.