



ADVENT

Today we begin a new liturgical year. Last Sunday, the feast of our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, was the last Sunday of the Church year.

You may recall that a new liturgical year brings a new cycle of readings at Mass. This year we will hear the Cycle C readings, which will primarily feature readings from the Gospel of Luke. You will also notice the change in the color of the vestments the priest wears. Since the end of the Easter season, he has been wearing the green of Ordinary Time. For these four Sundays of Advent, he will wear violet.

Advent is primarily a time of preparation and of waiting. The word itself is loosely translated from Latin and means coming. Advents makes us focus on the two Comings of Christ.

First of all, we are waiting to celebrate the first coming of our Lord as man, which we call the Incarnation. Secondly, Advent compels us to focus on the second coming of Christ. This is what we popularly refer to as the end of the world. As scripture tells us, “you know not the time,” so we must be always working at putting our lives in order - but even more so during Advent.

Advent is also a time of dramatic contrasts. For us here in the northern hemisphere, it is a time of increasing darkness and cold. But in contrast to that stark reality, it is also a season that is guiding us in our preparations for the light and the warmth that is Christmas and the Christmas season.

On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light another candle on the Advent wreath. Each week the light and the warmth intensifies. Each week, for four weeks, we increasingly focus on preparing for the birth of our Savior.

(If you as a couple, family, or individual would like to assist by lighting the Advent wreath candle at the beginning of the weekend Masses, please sign up on the chart in the vestibule of the church.)

At this time of year, our lives tend to get cluttered and even burdened with all of the frenetic activities we partake in as we get closer to Christmas. But we have Advent as a counterbalance to all of these distractions.

Advent is a time for solitude. It is a time for reflection. It pushes us to find time for silence. Try and take some quiet time for reflection. Perhaps you might want to reflect before the Lord during our Tuesday afternoon Adoration. What better way is there to sit in silence and reflect than to be before the Lord?

I like to think of the season of Advent as a gift. It is given to us by the Church to impel us to take the necessary time to properly prepare ourselves to celebrate the first coming of Jesus in Bethlehem. And Advent also gives us the added opportunity for reflection so that we may properly adjust our lives so we are ready for Christ's second return.

Let's not squander the opportunity for preparation and reflection that Advent offers us. Perhaps you can participate in our beautiful Advent Evening Prayer service each Monday at 6:30 p.m. Or, take advantage of the wide array of Advent reading material we have in the vestibule as a source of beginning your reflection. Or, as I mentioned earlier, come and pray before the Lord in solitude during our Tuesday afternoon Adoration. Take the time that is needed to properly prepare for the religious holiday that Christmas is. And finally, take the time to reflect on where you are at on your own personal journey toward eternal life.

What a wonderful gift we have - we have been given the chance to change!

Happy New (Liturgical) Year!

Jim Madura