



1st SUNDAY of ADVENT YEAR A – December 1, 2019

Today we begin a new Advent Season and a new Liturgical Year. Last night at the 5 o'clock Mass, we blessed our Parish Advent Wreath. As each candle is lit, it reminds us that we are getting closer and closer to celebrating the birth of the most important person who ever came to planet earth. He could have come as a mighty conquering hero, as some expected him to do, but he chose to come into our midst as a new born child.

Each Advent Season we prepare ourselves to commemorate the birth of Jesus. Without him, there would be no Christmas. Without him, there would be no redemption. Without him, there would be no salvation.

The Advent Wreath reminds us that we have four weeks to prepare for his birthday - not only by going shopping for stuff, but by taking an honest prayerful look at our relationship with our Lord.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us in the first reading today (Isaiah 2:1-5) that in the kingdom of Jesus peace and justice shall reign supreme. There will be joy and happiness and every tear will be wiped away. We aren't there yet but we are on our way.

St. Paul reminds us (Romans 13:11-14) that we must be prepared for the second coming of Jesus. We don't know when that will be. But we do know that it will be - Jesus said so. Since we don't know the time of his second coming, we would do well to be prepared as if it were going to happen today - and then, we don't have to worry.

In the Gospel (Matthew 24:37-44) Jesus tells us he will come again at a time we least expect. What is the time you least expect him to return? It's a sobering question and a sobering thought.

The first Christmas happened more than 2000 years ago, but Christmas happens every time you allow Jesus to use your flesh and your blood to serve the needs of our brothers and sisters in our own time. St. Teresa of Avila reminds us that he now uses us to continue his mission here on earth. Jesus is as much present in us as he is in the Eucharist, but in a different way. There he exists under the appearance of bread and wine. In us, he exists under the appearance of our flesh and blood.

Every time you feed the hungry...someone experiences the love of Jesus. Every time you give drink to the thirsty...someone experiences the love of Jesus. He ascended into heaven more than 2000 years ago, but he has been born again and again in every Christian who is prepared to allow him to do that.

What is Advent all about? It's all about preparing ourselves to allow Jesus to come into our minds, into our hearts and into our hands. If we do that properly, others will be able to see Jesus in us. Can others see Jesus in you?

For a few moments in silence, consider that question.

