

*Sometimes God sounds a lot like my grandson...*

## 1st Sunday of Advent – Year B

IS 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7, PS 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19, 1 COR 1:3-9, MK 13:33-37



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Today *is* the first Sunday of Advent. With Advent, we begin a new liturgical year. We start the liturgical year focusing on the event that has forever altered the course of human history. Christmas celebrates the incarnation of God and man in the child Jesus. Nothing will ever be the same. It is this event that we prepare to celebrate in the Advent season. This is our hope and our joy.

Today's readings are rich but before we look at content, I ask that you step back with me for the broader perspective. If we begin to look at the span of human history, we see that God speaks through the millennia. From the Old Testament, to the New Testament, to this very moment God speaks with each of us. Think about that. Let it sink in. This God of ours seeks a deepening intimacy with every man, woman and child. Can there be a more profound love than that? What a gift. With a gentle nudge of heart, God calls us forward.

I like the image in our first reading of the potter working and shaping the clay. There is an intimacy there. The potter uses a wire to repeatedly cut and fold the clay eliminating any air bubbles that may cause damage in firing. He feels the clay. If it is not too wet or too dry, he can shape it into something of beauty. There is almost a dialogue between the potter's fingers and the clay. Are you ready to be shaped... to become something more? And so it is with each of us. The Lord asks with a nudge of heart. It is ours to respond or not.

Our Gospel today talks about being watchful and alert. This is the response Jesus gives to his disciples' question about the end times. Jesus encourages the apostles and us to remain faithful. We are faithful by being attentive to our prayer life. I am thinking here of quiet, contemplative prayer where one clears

their mind, open to the possibility that the Divine Potter may ask to knead the clay of our heart. Faithfulness is coming to prayer expecting to hear God.

As difficult as all this may seem, St. Paul assures us that we have, "...been enriched in every way, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift." <sup>1 Cor 1:3-9</sup>

The knowledge that we have the gifts to hear His voice helps to make it through quarantine and Covid-19. Sometimes, God's voice sounds a lot like my grandson, Oliver. At two years old, looking up, he smiles and says, "Grandpa, hand, hand!" He then takes my hand and shows me this or that, or the trails in the woods behind his house. Oliver is excited to show me his world. God is also excited to show us a world and a love far greater than we can imagine. I must admit, there have been times in this pandemic, when in the depth of my prayer, I have called out, "Lord, hand, hand." Thanks, Oliver. Young children and infants still bring the Good News.

It is hard to be apart. We are social beings. Social distancing and separation from those that we love is trying, to say the least. Perhaps that is why God sent His Son, so that we could know His embrace. God is with us always, for we are created in His image and likeness, but sometimes we just need a hug. Our reception of the Eucharist at Mass is that divine embrace. For those that cannot attend Mass at this time, myself included, we are watchful and alert for the hug of a child or grandchild. It is there that we find Eucharist.

My prayer this Advent is for our health care workers, researchers and those that are isolated or marginalized. Bless us all Lord as we give watch in the night.

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

Note: Due to Covid-19 this homily was not delivered.