

**First Sunday of Advent November 28, 2021**  
**Our Lady of Perpetual Help**

**First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16**

<sup>14</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

because your redemption is drawing near.” ...

<sup>34</sup> “But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare; <sup>35</sup> for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.”

**Responsorial Psalm: Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14**

**R. (1b) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths, Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior, and for you I wait all the day.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way. He guides the humble to justice, and teaches the humble his way.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees. The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him, and his covenant, for their instruction.

**R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.**

**Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2**

<sup>3:12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. <sup>4:1</sup> Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

**Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**

<sup>25</sup> “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, <sup>26</sup> men fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads,

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#### **INVITATION TO PRAY**

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

#### **Proclaim the Scriptures out loud**

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

#### **INVITATION TO REFLECT**

“My Daddy! My Daddy!” the little boy sang out as he spotted his father progressing up the long airport corridor, returning after a long trip. For some time, the little boy had pranced around animatedly waiting and watching. His eyes, his face, his whole body strained forward scanning the faces of other passengers to find his father, moving back and forth trying to see around the emerging throng of passengers. Then, sighting his dad, he lit up with recognition, joyfully exclaiming for all to hear, “My Daddy! My Daddy!” This Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent, and the experience of this little boy provides an apt study of what it means to await Christ’ coming. Waiting is not a passive exercise of the marginally interested, instead it should be active anticipation. All our faculties should be attuned to the fact that someone important is about to appear. There should be a concentration of our attention and a readiness to respond in enthusiastic greeting. This week’s Gospel reading provides an appropriate transition from the end of one liturgical year to the beginning of a new liturgical year, for it alerts us to Jesus’ second advent, when he will return from heaven to claim his own. We are encouraged to “look up,” “raise your heads,” “take heed,” “watch,” and pray for his coming is real and redemptive, as real and redemptive as was his first coming. And these actions we are encouraged to follow are the actions of active waiting. With the Second Advent in mind we are stimulated to celebrate his first Advent with similar active waiting, anticipating a fresh appearing of Jesus’ presence in our lives. Will we be like the little boy mentioned above focusing and concentrating our attention on seeing him? Or will we have our attention diverted by the glitz and secular trappings of a Christmas that ignores that he ever existed, or could ever again reappear to us? Perhaps this is the week when we should determine a plan for peering around the emerging onslaught of secular traditions and purely mercenary celebrations, to actively watch for Jesus. If we take time now to sort out what we are going to do to actively watch for him in the face of this onslaught, and then follow through on our intention, we too will burst forth with exclamations of joy. “‘For while all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, thy almighty word leapt down from heaven from thy royal throne...’ The passage, brimming with the mystery of the Incarnation, is wonderfully expressive of the infinite stillness that hovered over Christ’s birth. For the greatest things are accomplished in silence—not in the clamor and display of superficial eventfulness, but in the deep clarity of inner vision, in the almost imperceptible start of decision, in quiet overcoming and hidden sacrifice. Spiritual conception happens when the heart is quickened by love, and the free will stirs to action,” (from *The Lord*, by Romano Guardini.)

Let us pray as we dwell in this time period between Jesus’ first and second appearing that there might be a third appearing, the reappearing of Jesus in our hearts and lives. When the little boy’s dad appeared, he scooped up his son in his arms in mutual love and spent a lifetime mentoring his son to growth and maturity. So, may it be with the reappearing Christ in our lives that our hearts would be quickened by love and our free will stirred

into action.

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**INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING**

First Reading

1. Compare this promise of Jesus' first advent with the promise of his second advent found in this week's Gospel reading.

Second Reading

2. Define holiness. What are proper motives for pursuing holiness?
3. What does it mean to "establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father"?

Gospel Reading

4. Compare your feelings toward the First Advent with your feelings about the Second Advent.
5. Why do you think the Holy Spirit had Luke write about these things?
6. How do you think we could practically implement this advice?
7. What inner message of the heart is the Spirit whispering to you and yours?

**INVITATION TO ACT**

*Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.*

**CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY**

*Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.*