

Praying the Sunday Gospel

Advent 1 - C

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

November 28, 2021

Background on the Gospel and the inauguration of a New Church Year with the season of Advent

The new Church year begins with a startling jolt! Instead of calm pleasantries and pleasing possibilities we are challenged to think of the end of all time and our responsibility to be well-prepared for the likely reality of a sudden collapse of all we know!

At first hearing this gospel seems odd for the beginning of a new year, but yet it is relevant and appropriate for several reasons:

(1) Advent is about how the future is already happening and unfolding here and now; the world as we know it is “falling apart.” Everything of this life is tentative and passing away.

(2) But positively, every ending opens the way to new possibilities; as the cosmos collapses, we see the Son of Man arriving in glory and majesty. He’s been with us all along but we couldn’t see Him. Removing the elements of this world allows us a full vision of His presence and a true encounter with Him. In fact, we can (and should) rise and lift up our heads with eager joy. Our redemption is at hand; that is, all our struggles and failures will be transformed and made new, pure and beautiful in the radiance of His presence.

Points for Prayer and Reflection

(1) An essential point of Christianity and of Advent in particular is that God comes to us: God enters into our world. He takes the initiative. We should be saying “Come,

Lord Jesus!” He comes when he wishes but nonetheless we could (and should) be inviting him each day: Thy Kingdom come! We want and need the redemption He alone can bring with joyful enthusiasm and hope, pray for the coming/return of Christ and all it will mean.

(2) Advent is a time to broaden and widen our vision, to set our sights on re-building the world (a theme of week-day Advent readings). We often think of Advent as preparation for Christmas but in fact it’s preparation for a new discovery and deeper appreciation of how God is always with us and seeking our partnership. How is my own vision too narrow? Pray for a larger perspective that takes into account all creation and all people!

(3) Luke’s Gospel was written for a people getting restless for the Lord’s arrival and wondering why he had not yet returned. They were actually doubting he would return (hence the last part of today’s Gospel). And we today are perhaps not much better for we are not really eager for “the end”; we’re pretty comfortable as we are. Pray for the grace to “let go” of control and be open to the subtle voice of God asking you to reach out to others in need.

(4) This time of year we ask each other what we might like as a gift for Christmas. Why not turn that dynamic around and ask God what He thinks you “need” for Christmas? Ask him to give whatever he wishes to offer you!