

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR C).



THE GOSPEL Luke 21:25-28, 34-36 *Be vigilant at all times*

Jesus.

You came into our world with all its sorrows.
Keep us watchful for your presence
in the midst of our struggles.
Tell us again that your
love will triumph.

Make us vigilant. Put our hearts on alert.
Let us be aware of all the places
in our world where
you are.

In all beauty.

Anywhere there is love.

In helping hands reaching out.

Come,
Lord Jesus, to all the dwellings
in our lives where
you are not
yet.

THE FIRST READING Jeremiah 33:14-16

***The days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will fulfill the promise.***

We have
seen the root of Jesse.
Which has shown us the way to go.
But the road is crooked and the hills are high.

We can know what you say but we cannot hear very well
over the moans of the oppressed peoples,
the cries of the hungry children,
and the din of all
our wars.

As Judah yearned for
safety, so do we
yearn for you,
O Lord.

Come
again with promises.

We long for healing and justice

THE SECOND READING [1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2](#)

***May the Lord make you increase and abound
in love for one another and for all.***

Stretch us,
Lord.

We want to overflow
with love for one another and
for every person whom
we should ever
meet.

We want to be one family that shares
our earth, our riches, and all
our dreams together. (*Anne Osdiéck*)

REFLECTION:

Gospel Reading

Jesus teaches his disciples to be vigilant so that they will be ready when the Son of Man comes in glory.

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of the new liturgical year. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. The key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice.

In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Luke will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle C). Today's Gospel is taken from the last chapter before the passion narrative in which Jesus is teaching in the Temple. We hear Jesus speak to his disciples about the need for vigilance and prayer as they wait for the coming of the Son of Man in glory. This passage marks the conclusion of a lengthy dialogue in which Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, warns about the persecution and tribulations to follow, and identifies the signs that will signal the coming of the Son of Man in glory.

The community for whom Luke wrote his Gospel may have believed that they were already experiencing some of the events Jesus described. Most scholars believe that Luke's Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. At the time, many Christians interpreted this event as an indication that Jesus' second coming was near.

Though Jesus predicts a time of destruction and fear, Jesus indicates that others will be frightened; Jesus' disciples are not to fear, but are to stand tall. Yet Jesus does not promise deliverance from anxiety or tribulations. He encourages his disciples to pray for strength. The early Christian communities did not find consolation in the promise of a utopia, nor should we. Instead, we find in our Christian faith the means by which we witness to God's unfailing love for us in all circumstances.

Jesus' predictions about the end times may sound dire, but in the next paragraph Luke tells us that people woke early to listen to Jesus' teaching in the Temple area. In his person and in his message, those who heard Jesus found strength and consolation. Like the first Christians, we may encounter events and circumstances that could lead us to despair. Through prayer, however, we find strength and consolation in Jesus' words and in his continuing presence with us to endure all things and to witness to the action of God in our world.