

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Advent Year “A”  
November 27-28, 2022

*Jesus Christ, our true hope*

Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matt. 24:37-44

“O my God, I trust in you, let me not be put to shame; do not allow my enemies to laugh at me; for none of those who are awaiting you will be disappointed.” You heard these words at the very beginning of Mass. The Entrance Antiphon is part of the Church’s liturgy, and beautifully sums up how we place our trust in God. Rather than concern ourselves with what others may think, we strive each day to follow the Lord.

Having become fully initiated in the Catholic Church with the reception of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, it is incumbent upon us to live the virtues as Christ taught. But this is impossible to do without the grace that comes from acknowledging Christ’s role in our lives. Advent is a hope-filled season in which we acknowledge the need for a Savior and prepare to receive him once again. We must accept Jesus Christ each day. This is what our daily bread means—it has a 24-hour shelf life!

We do not control God at my whim. The Lord is not my refuge, as if I produce a coupon to redeem when I get an urge to eat at a restaurant. The Lord God holds us in being; without him, we would cease to exist. God is “higher than my highest and more inward than my innermost self,” remarked St. Augustine in his *Confessions*.<sup>1</sup>

At every moment, God upholds and sustains us in being. As the Old Testament Book of Wisdom observes: “How would anything have endured if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?”<sup>2</sup> It is equally true that for God’s will to be made manifest, our cooperation is utilized. God gives to us creatures not only our existence, but also the dignity of cooperating in the accomplishment of His plan for us by means of free will. We remain on guard, lest we attribute any accomplishment of ours as solely to our own doing. This is where it all breaks down, seen as a

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<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine, “Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo.” *Confessions* 3,6,11, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. # 300.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Wisdom 11:25

weakness to admit that we are powerless. Rather, it is a token of almighty God's goodness. Allow God's grace to play out. As Scripture reminds us: "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."<sup>3</sup> We must be willing to be patient for His grace to be made manifest. It can be quite frustrating when we do not see results.

Spiritual growth is marked incrementally. Do not evaluate yourself every single day. While Advent is our shortest liturgical season, Christmas falls on a Sunday this year. Thus, we experience it in its entirety. When we faithfully perform our duties, our tasks, our assignments, imperceptibly we begin to change. More properly, God is effecting change in us.

Use all of Advent this year to mark growth. May our hope-filled preparation for the coming of the Lord effect a real impact on us and upon those whom we love. St. Paul reminds us in our second reading that now is the hour for us to rise from sleep. Our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. What more of an invitation do we need? "Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation."<sup>4</sup>

There is much work to be done. Now is the time to be prepared. Ancient mariners knew to look to the sky for signs. "Red sky at night, sailors delight; red sky at morning, sailor take warning." Jesus noted that while they may be able to detect certain signs of the weather, far greater signs have to do with the reign of God.

Each time that you witness to the Gospel in a manner that is honest and true, you help to bring about God's reign. His words will never pass away. Whether they are heard and put into action is mostly up to us. Let each of us do our part this Advent season to usher in His kingdom.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Philippians 2:13

<sup>4</sup> General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, norm #39