

New Brighton, Sunday 27th November 2022

1st Sunday of Advent

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Advent means expectation. We are expecting the coming of the Messiah in the liturgical year. These four weeks accounts for the centuries in millenniums humanity expected the promise of the Messiah being fulfilled. This was a long and difficult expectation, but lightened by a moment of desire, hope and even joy.

Why should we expect the Lord to come? He already came 2000 years ago. And when he left Earth to sit at the right hand of God, it promised to never leave us orphans being with us until the end of this world.

Who are we supposed to expect?

“The liturgical season of Advent is a season of preparation by means of purification.”¹ Christ already came once upon Earth and brought us salvation through the mystery of His Passion and Resurrection. Expecting the Messiah again, for him to come again as it did, is not our expectation today.

This historical expectation is good to remember what happened. It's needed to understand the ways to have a fruitful time of preparation for Christmas.

As for the explanation of the sacred text of the Bible, we have in this season of expectation a mystical and eschatological meaning.

Jesus didn't come only for men living at the time of his life upon Earth. He came for all men of good will, which means that he still coming now, as we can read in St John's Gospel: “I will not leave you orphans. I will come back to you. If someone's loves me, he will keep my word and my Father and I will come in him.”² Jesus is coming in any of us who truly desire to receive Him, and this happens through a spiritual, mysterious but real way.

He uses multiple ways for this: mainly the Sacraments and the Divine Liturgy, which is elevating us as a direct witnesses of His life, as we are living the 33 years of His time on Earth during the 12 months of the liturgical year, starting from the first Sunday of Advent until the last Sunday of the Pentecost. Therefore, on Christmas Day, He's coming for real, visiting the Holy Church and our souls. Our expectation, our desires can be true, and help this visit to become more fruitful for ourselves.

The second way to understand this expectation is a eschatological, which means about the end of the world. That's the reason why the liturgy is giving us today the preaching of Jesus about the end of the world. We are expecting Christ to come in His glory to judge all nations. His birth in Bethlehem was the prelude for all this. His coming in our souls through sacraments and liturgy is the preparation to the same thing. Therefore, the texts of this Advent season can also be read as the desire, the hope of this last day, when everything mortal will end, and eternity will start with the glory of the Court of the Saints!

¹ Cardinal Burke, “Advent and the Door of our Hearts”, 25th November 2022

² John, XIV, 18, 23

If we gather these three ideas of Christ coming yesterday, today and tomorrow, *Hodie et in Saecula*³, we present ourselves the contemplation of the of Christ in His totality.

We should not let ourselves go through too much affliction and sorrow. The liturgy is inviting us to prepare and purify our heart, but joyfully, with a great desire to see our Redeemer, this infant who will lay in our cribs on Christmas night.

The spirit of Advent doesn't seem as penitential as Lent. This evidence can be found in the liturgy as we are still singing the Alleluias, and we maintain the feast days of the Saints across our four weeks of preparation.

But who better than Our Lady could help us to prepare ourselves for Christmas? She carried in secret our Lord for nine months, being united to him in her flesh as well as in her mind.

“During the Season of Advent, let us unite in a special way with the Blessed Virgin Mary, the most perfect flower of the People of God, whom God prepared from the moment of her conception to receive the Messiah in her womb at the moment of His coming in time. Let’s implore her intercession, so that we can imitate her pure heart, so our hearts are ever more willing to receive Christ at His coming into our life, above all through the reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, the Heavenly Bread which is truly His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.”⁴

The novena to the Immaculate Conception is starting soon. This devotion is inviting us to be more united to our mother in heaven. Let's make it special again this year by the devoted prayer to Our Lady.

We read in the introit, and we will read in the offertory Antiphon the words of the psalmist, asking the benevolence of the Lord in whom we trust. “To you I lift up my soul: in You, o my God, I trust; Let me not be put to shame: Let not my enemies exult over me.” Let's say these same words as a prayer to Our Lady: To you I lift up my soul: in You, o my Lady, I trust; Let me not be put to shame: Let not my enemies exult over me.

She opened the flows of the grace from the redemption with Her Fiat. If we ask her, She will open our hearts to receive these graces, and become her true sons.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Main source used: Dom Ludovic Baron, L'Expression du chant grégorien, 1st volume, commentaire liturgique et musical des messes des dimanches et des principales fêtes de l'année : Le Temporal, de l'Avent à Pâques. Éditions Saint Rémi, 1947.

³ Hb, XII, 8

⁴ Cardinal Burke, “Advent and the Door of our Hearts”, 25th November 2022 <https://www.cardinalburke.com/presentations/advent-and-the-door-of-our-hearts>