

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT; Cycle – A; Nov. 30th 2025
Is.2: 1-5; Rom. 13: 11-14; Mt. 24: 37-44

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Christmas is the most joyful celebration in the Church. Unfortunately, the apostles and the early century Christians didn't have the chance to celebrate the Christmas. In fact, the celebration of the birth of Christ started in Rome only in the middle of the 4th century. But it took a few centuries before it evolved to the present form. Initially different dioceses in the West introduced a period of preparation attached to Christmas, without any unanimity in the length of the period of preparation. This period was a time of hard penance. Finally Rome introduced the period of preparation only in the 6th century and it was decided that it should be from Dec. 1 to 25 and no penitential character was attached to it. Eventually this became the practice of the Universal Church and same rule continues today. According to the new regulation the Advent is supposed to begin on the last Sunday of November (*if it falls towards the end of the month*) or the first Sunday of December.

Historically speaking the Church adopted the traditions of other cultures to form the present day Christmas celebration. For example, the Pagan celebration of the Sun god influenced the early Christians who were originally Pagans. So the celebration of Christ the true light was a replacement of the Sun god. The Advent wreath with four candles is part of our long-standing Catholic Tradition. But the custom of using the advent wreath is not part of the Eastern Churches. However, the actual origin of it is uncertain. There is evidence of pre-Christian Germanic peoples using wreaths with lit candles during the cold and dark December days as a sign of hope in the future with warm Sunny days of spring. By the middle Ages, the Christians perhaps adopted this tradition and used Advent wreathes a part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. It made sense, as Christ is “the light that came into the world” to dispel the darkness of sin.

The name advent comes from the Latin word ***adventus***, means **arrival**. It was originally used to denote only the birth of Jesus, and it was applied to Christmas alone. But later the preachers expanded its meaning to include the whole period of preparation in which the word advent is now used. The original intention of this period was to give the faithful a time for strict spiritual preparation to welcome the coming of Christ. Unfortunately, due to the commercialization of the season in the modern age, the spiritual aspect of this period is totally lost.

As soon as we hear the word advent or Christmas we think only about the **birth of the Lord in the History**. The people of Israel waited only for the physical arrival of the

Messiah among them. But today the word represents **the threefold coming of Jesus**. In the first sense it is meant for the **birth of Jesus** which took place more than 2000 years ago; secondly it stands for **the second coming of the Lord** at the end of the age and thirdly **the coming of Christ in our** individual life during our lifetime. The Church in the first century onwards believed in the second glorious coming of the Lord who will come to judge the world. *There are 318 references in the New Testament to the second coming of the Lord.* So together with the Christmas celebrations the Church draws our attention to the second coming of the Lord. Hence on the first Sunday of Advent the gospel reading gives the account of the Second Coming of the Lord. Through the apocalyptic writing, in today's gospel Matthew shows us that the Lord will appear while the people are busy with material things and only 50% will be prepared to welcome him. Matthew makes it very clear that while the people are busy with their routine activities, the coming of the Lord takes place uneventfully. He compares the situation with the time of Noah. So Jesus warns the faithful to be prepared and vigilant so that we may be able to welcome the Lord, even at the least expected time.

For our personal life the second coming of the Lord meant my last day in the world which can happen even today. Very often you and I postpone the spiritual preparation for tomorrow so that we can do many other things today. But that tomorrow is not ours and the word tomorrow is very dangerous to our spiritual life. We have only today to live; so let us live each day as if it is my last day. For anything in the world we can make a schedule and appointment but not for the coming of the Lord. Let us make a simple resolution as we begin another advent season that this Christmas will give us a little more Christ experience and closeness to him. But above all we have to appreciate the day today coming of Jesus in different ways in our life. Very often we don't recognize him, as he appears in our lives being disguised. So let us keep our eyes open and try to see Jesus in our daily activities and in our relationship with our fellow beings.