

Advent: Waiting and Hope

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

As we enter the First Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect on the importance of waiting. In today's fast-paced world, waiting is often seen as an inconvenience. We are surrounded by instant gratification, and the concept of patience feels foreign. We're either looking back to what we've lost or gazing anxiously ahead, but rarely do we settle in the present moment. Advent, however, is a season that calls us to slow down and wait with purpose, reminding us that waiting can be holy, and it is in the waiting that we grow in faith.

Today's Gospel, taken from Luke 21, speaks of the end times and the second coming of Christ. It's a passage that might seem out of place during Advent—a season we usually associate with preparing for the birth of Christ. Yet, this reading is crucial because Advent is not just a time of looking back to the historical event of Christ's birth but also a time of looking forward to his promised return. Luke's Gospel, written around 85 AD, emphasizes the joy and hope we are to live with, even in the face of the unknown. It's a reminder that our faith is not simply rooted in the past but is oriented toward the future fulfillment of God's promises.

Advent calls us to live in joyful hope, even as we experience the uncertainties, tragedies, and frailties of life. We are, after all, an Advent people—living in the “in-between” of Christ's first coming and his second. While the world around us may be caught up in the materialism and rush of the holiday season, Peter Kreeft, a Catholic philosopher, reminds us that we are meant to focus on the “holy days,” not just the holidays. This is the time to realign our lives, to prepare for the return of Christ and to order everything around him. How often do we allow distractions to take priority over our spiritual lives? How often do we neglect to prepare for the most important event of all—Christ's second coming?

The Gospel today urges us to stay vigilant and to not be weighed down by the anxieties of daily life. The Lord is at hand, and we are called to live with that awareness. This isn't a call to live in fear but in hope and love. The Christian life is meant to be a preparation for the moment we meet Christ—whether it is at the end of our individual lives or at his glorious return. The challenge is to open our hearts now to his presence, his love, and his grace. Will we be ready to meet him when he comes again?

As we begin this new liturgical year, Advent gives us the opportunity to reflect on how we are living our lives in the light of Christ's coming. Are we spending time with him in prayer? Are we living out our faith in love and service to others? Are we living with a sense of joyful anticipation, trusting that God's promises are coming true? Let this Advent be a time of preparation, not just for the celebration of Christmas but for the ultimate fulfillment of God's kingdom. The darkness may seem overwhelming at times, but the light of Christ is always with us. Let us live in that light, ordering our lives for his second coming and allowing everything else to fall into place around him.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy