

First Sunday of Advent - C – 2018-2019
Jer. 33.14-16///1 Thes. 3.12-4.2///Luke 21.25-28,34-36

→since the end of summer there have been two hurricanes on the east coast

→we have heard and seen the destruction and devastation of wildfires in California....

→there are migrant refugees at the border in the south whose future remains uncertain...

→and on Monday in our own backyard...it was announced that GM will idle the Lordstown plant in March...and with this news still so fresh...we have yet to realize the full impact of what this means...

→and today we hear “there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars....nations will be in dismay...the seas will roar and the powers of heaven will be shaken...

→sometimes life feels like the world is shattering and collapsing

→and perhaps we are feeling this kind of world right now...when it appears as if hope **is all** but exhausted

→**and this**....is our good news!

PAUSE

→today...begins our Advent season...our parish theme this year is “hearts are full of hope and joy”....[perhaps more appropriate now than when we chose it weeks ago...]

→and today we begin our four-week long marathon of sprinting towards the Christmas finish line...

→the days grow shorter, the darkness grows longer and nighttime takes over....

→there already is a sense of losing what precious time we have with our stressful and anxiety-filled lives,

->only to hear...Jesus issuing a stern warning in disturbing language... “people will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming...and so be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape....”

->few of us, might take these words seriously....

->for those who heard them first...perhaps they wanted to know when the world was coming to an end...as even they grew weary of wondering and waiting....

->the truth is...we all are waiting for Christ to return...we all believe that God will keep his promises...and that is why our hearts can be full of hope and joy!

PAUSE

->so...maybe today’s message is not about earthquakes and hurricanes, raging wild fires and floods, plant closings and uncertainty...or even looking up at the heavens for Christ coming in a cloud...but rather it really is about redemption and promises kept.

->perhaps it’s not about what Christ will do and when he’ll do it...but rather about what we should be doing here and now...and seeing what is already right in front of us.

->very often there are so many things that we want to do or so many things we should do, but instead we keep putting them off---for one reason or another

->there are parents who want to get to know their children better ///and perhaps grown children who want to get to know their parents better /// but many keep putting it off---for some reason or another

→there are husbands and wives who want to deepen their relationship with one another but --
-for some reason or another—they keep putting it off

→and I am sure there are friends we have, in which we want to get to know better or spend
more time with....but instead we keep putting it off---for some reason or another

[PAUSE]

---there is a tendency in all of us to put things off...to shove things aside because we are often
either too busy...or we don't want to be bothered...or we use the excuse that we just don't have the
time////

→we all procrastinate....for some reason or another

→[and] yet o.t.o.h...from a different perspective, one could also say.... that perhaps our
problem isn't that we put things off....but rather, often it is that we sometimes miss our
opportunities.

----and today Jesus has something to say about all of this in our gospel reading...

--because he tells us to "be on guard...be vigilant" and "pray constantly"....."be ready" for that
great day and moment.....i.o.w. don't miss this opportunity that lies before us

PAUSE

→this season of Advent is truly a gift...a precious time to straighten out what is not yet
right...

...to overcome our struggles...that area of darkness in our lives...and to heal what
we've broken...

→to bring Christ back into our lives...///

→this season interrupts our Christmas marathon with the opportunity to look into our lives no matter how shattered or wonderful they might be...[and] to find Christ once again

→to find Christ who comes to us in our brokenness and our fear and our uncertainty

→and that is why Advent is such an important season

→it means "coming" and has as its root the word "adventure"

And so the word itself underscores its purpose

→Advent is about "coming into the adventure"to ready ourselves for the coming of Jesus,.

→with hearts full of hope and joy

PAUSE

→time passes for all of us...no matter how quickly or how slowly that might be...

→[and] we wait...knowing that the world can end for each of us at any time

→that is what Advent is all about...

///PAUSE////

→and so the next four weeks is our opportunity to prepare /// to wait for the coming of the Lord **who will** keep his promise to us...

→like so many other things in our lives

→let us not allow this opportunity to be missed or put aside