

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)
SALVATION IS NEARER TO US NOW
November 26/27, 2022

We have started a new liturgical year with the season of Advent. Advent is from a Latin word 'Adventus', which means 'coming'; it is the coming of the Lord. We commemorate the two-fold coming of the Lord. The first is His birth, and the second coming at the end of time. The Church wants us to focus more on Christ's second coming.

Nobody knows when He is coming, but what will happen has been revealed to us. The prophet Isaiah told the Israelites what Judah and Jerusalem would be. Jerusalem would be great, and nations would go there to be instructed and learn the way of the Lord. That would be the days of the Messiah. There would be no more wars but peace.

There is a call to prepare for the day of the Lord at all times because it is unknown to everyone. One may think that it is not close but far away. St. Paul reminds us that it is nearer than we first believed. Considering our life on earth, we can understand that our days are shorter now than when we were born. This affects our spiritual life as well. Even those born yesterday has some hours short of their lifespan.

But will Christ come at all? The scriptures tell us that God is faithful and will always fulfil His promise. He promised Abraham a child and it was fulfilled. The prophets foretold the coming of the Emmanuel, and Jesus was born. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit and on Pentecost day, He descended. So, He will come again as we always say during Mass.

Since God does not fail in His promises, what am I to do? I am to watch and be ready. St. Paul reminds me that my salvation is nearer than I think, and he has prescribed some of the things to do to meet the requirement of seeing Jesus when He comes. He wants me to put away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. It is to go back for the light given to me when I was baptized and put away the evil in my life. I am invited to walk in the light of the Lord.

Jesus warns me not to take things for granted and be forgetful of my way of life, because people were caught unawares during the days of Noah and Lot. Earthly happiness and joy made them forget about God and they perished.

There is the need to watch and pray. It is not only to do away with evil, but to do good and pray at all times. The modern man has turned everything into merry-making and the spiritual aspect of celebrations is missing or put aside. The message to the Church in Laodicea can be a good food for thought for you and me now: "You say to yourself: I am rich, I have made a fortune and have everything I want, never realizing that you are wretchedly and pitifully poor and blind and naked too. I warn you, buy from me the gold that has been tested in the fire to make you truly rich, and white robes to clothe you and hide your shameful nakedness, and ointment to put on your eyes to enable you to see" (Rev.3:17-18). At the time of Noah and Lot, that was what the people thought, and many of us think the same.

At the time of the coming of the Lord, one of the two men working together will be taken and the other left. In the same way one woman will be taken and the other left. Why so, and who will be taken? The one taken will be the one who is vigilant and always preparing not only physically, but most importantly, spiritually. Am I the one going to be taken, or the one to be left behind? I should not forget that being left behind entails wailing and grinding of teeth. There will be suffering involved. I cannot say I am young so there is more time, and you cannot say I am old so it is close; the Lord can come to visit me at any day and time, so I should stay awake and be ready all the time. Those to be taken will rejoice forever. What do I prefer?