

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2024

Gospel: (Luke 21:25-28, 34-36)

Jesus said to his disciples: *“There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish, distraught at the roaring of the sea and the waves. Men will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the earth. The powers in the heavens will be shaken. After that, men will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads, for your ransom is near at hand. Be on guard... The great day will suddenly close in on you like a trap. The day I speak of will come upon all who dwell on the face of the earth, so be on the watch. Pray constantly for the strength to escape whatever is in prospect, and to stand secure before the Son of Man.”*

Reflection:

This time of year is filled with anticipation and waiting! The important questions for us are, “What do we anticipate?” and “How do we await?” Stores are filled with Christmas things. Lights and decorations have sprung up. Christmas music on the radio is another harbinger of the day for which we wait. Our work of preparation is busied with card- sending, party-planning and attending, and gift-shopping. The First Sunday of Advent, the Church’s New Year, ushers in a different way of waiting, of heightened anticipation. We Christians don’t wait for a what, but for a Whom. And that changes the character of our waiting! If the followers of Christ are vigilant and have lives “blameless in holiness,” then when Christ comes they can “stand erect” without fear but with joyful anticipation of their redemption. This is the Whom and what of our waiting! (Living Liturgy, p. 2)

Vincenian Meditation:

Waiting in joyful anticipation...if we are to rejoice in the grace of God, we must have eyes that see and ears that hear. That in turn demands a reflecting heart, the sort of heart which Our Lady had and with which, she “pondered all things in her heart.” Our Lady has a marvelous capacity for wonder. There can be no wonder in our lives without silence. We are called to the service of the poor, but our service must come from a heart which resembles that of Our Lady who knew how to be silent, who knew how to wonder, who knew who to marvel at the grace of God, without which we can do nothing. (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p. 56)

Discussion: (Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence)

How will you “await” in joyful anticipation, silence and wonder for Christmas this Advent?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, as we await the fulfillment of your promise,
 -give us a heart that knows how to be silent.
You come as a visible sign of love,
 -give us a heart that knows how to wonder.
Strengthen us by your grace,
 -give us a heart that lives in joyful anticipation. Amen

