

ADVENT 2007 – WEEK ONE - BE PREPARED TO MEET THE LORD

Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

Romans 12: 11-13

The four weeks of Advent begins a new liturgical year on Sunday, December 2nd. In the darkest time of the year, we plant our hearts deep in the longing for the Promised Light of Jesus the Christ. Christ is still being born in us, still offering hope to real people. This longing changes us; it stirs our hearts to work for justice. We cradle fragile people in our care. We swaddle the poor in our prayer. We ache for the day when peace will shine on us.

Advent gives us new ears to hear the cries of the prophets, Isaiah, John the Baptist and Mary invite us into an intimate journey of listening to God's call an preparing a new place suitable for new birth and love. Even in this generation our lives hold lovingly the words, the desires, and the passion of our ancestors' cries for change and conversion. Their words become a carillon of hope in the chaos of war, natural disasters and controversy.

From At Home Retreat: Advent 2007. Rev. Ronald Raab, CSC



PRESENCE OF GOD

Lord God, we pause and realize Your continual presence among us. Besides this we know what hour it is, how it is full time now for us to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far-gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13

Holy are You, O God, holy and mighty, holy and living forever!

PRAYER

Jesus,

I just rolled out of bed.

Today, promise me that You will wake me up.

**Not a hot shower, not a mug of smooth coffee,
but help me view my ordinary life differently.**

My routine has numbed me to my real friendships.

My sarcasm scratches my soul and leaves me lonely.

My self-sufficiency destroys my trust in You.

I am not sure that I want to pay attention to Your Word.

You ask so much of me.

I know I need to end the excuses and trust in You again.

Even though I want to go back to bed,

I hear Your Advent call,

“Stay awake!”

Amen.

HYMN: CITY OF GOD

1. Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep!

A new day is dawning for all those who weep.

The people in darkness have seen a great light.

The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Refrain: Let us build the city of God.

May our tears be turned into dancing.

For the Lord our light and our love has turned the night into day.

2. We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day.

The One who has loved us has brightened our way.

The Lord of all kindness has called us to be

a light for all people to set their hearts free.

3. God is light; in God there is no darkness.

Let us walk in the light. God's children one and all.

O comfort my people make gentle your words,

proclaim to my city the day of her birth.

4. O city of gladness now lift up your voice,

proclaim the good tidings that all may rejoice.

Dan Schutte

ISAIAH 2: 1-5

In the last days, the mountain of Yahweh's house shall be set over the highest mountains and shall tower over the hills. All the nations shall stream to it, saying, "Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths. For the Teaching comes from Zion, and from Jerusalem the word of Yahweh.

He will rule over the nations and settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not raise sword against nation; they will train for war no more. O nation of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!"

MATTHEW 24: 36-44



But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be (also) at the coming of the Son of Man.

Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay

awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.

Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.

REFLECTION

Now we begin the year of the Lord 2008, with the prophecies of Isaiah whose visions are ones of justice, peace, light and freedom, hope for all the nations, and unity among all peoples. This is the intent, the will of God for all on earth. God wants all to know wisdom and hear the Word of God, and walk in the paths of truth and communion. And there is to be no war, no aggression, no conflicts between nations, and no preparation for killing. We are to be about the work of God: feeding the hungry, giving wisdom to all, and living in the peace and light of God. This is what God is about-is this what we are about?

If not, wake up! Stop all the evil that leads to war, to killing, hate and divisions! Stop doing deeds that are laced with evil. It is time to stand in the light-the Light of the World that is Jesus the Son of Man coming to call us all to justice, to the truth. It is time to be seen for who we are and what we have done, individually and with others, in this world, in our times. There is no more time for preparation-Our God, the Son of Man is coming-NOW! Today is the day of the Lord.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

**When I seem to be sleepwalking through life, Lord,
help me to realize that I need to take responsibility for my life.**

**When I realize that Advent is a moment in our year that causes me to
believe deeply in You, O God;
help me to set spiritual priorities.**

**When my faith wanders off and my heart grows cold;
wake me up Lord and let me trust more deeply in You.**

more

**When I think about Advent;
help me to hear its call to open myself to You, Lord,
to love more deeply, and to respond to others more lovingly.**

**When I come to realize that Advent invites me to wipe
the sleep from my eyes;
help me to change the skepticism and cynicism
that has corroded my heart.**

**When You, Lord, provide us with these weeks of Advent;
help me to dance in the darkness and surrender to the rhythm
of redeeming grace.**

Let us pray; Hear our humble prayers as we realize that this Advent time brings us a new perspective on how we wait for You, O God. Give us patience that we will never give up and smooth the rough paths that separate us from You. May the daily Advent Scripture readings and our prayers raise up a new passion for Your presence and activity in our lives. We ask this in the name of our Emmanuel. Amen.

HYMN: PATIENCE PEOPLE

Patience people, till the Lord is come.

See the farmer await the yield of the soil.

He watches it in winter and in spring rain.

Patience, people, for the Lord is coming.

You have seen the purpose of the Lord.

You know of His compassion and His mercy.

Patience, people, for the Lord is coming.

Steady your hearts for the Lord is close at hand.

And do not grumble one against the other.

Patience, people, for the Lord is coming.

John Foley, S.J.

DE LA SALLE'S MEDITATION for the FIRST SUNDAY of ADVENT

In order that we may not endure a terrible and crushing sentence when we appear before the Just Judge Who will judge us for eternity,

let us constantly strive to free ourselves of our defects

for we do not know the day nor the hour that we will meet Him.

If the saints felt so much fear when considering this day, what feelings should we experience, we who show such little fervor for God, and who fulfill our duties so negligently?



Prayer for God's Presence

**I am weak, I am poor,
Filled with fear and pride;
Without You, living God,
Dry and dead inside;
Full of plans, full of self,
Chasing my own way;
Running here, running there,
No time left to pray.
I am weak, I am poor,
Empty now within;
Come, O God, heal my life,
Make me whole again.**

**You are love, only love,
Mercy through and through.
You are God, You are here--
I will look to You.
Come, my Lord, be in me
All You long to be--
Every thought, every hope,
Every breath I breathe.
You are love, only love--
Lead in all I do.
Let me live, loving Lord,
Evermore in You.**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
inspire us to live a life worthy of the lord.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!