



Gospel Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Your redemption is near at hand.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

Reflection by Greg Sunter

We are, perhaps, used to thinking of the season of Advent as a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas. But this week's readings, and the readings of the next few weeks, remind us that the notion of preparation extends well beyond the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We are reminded that we are, in fact, living in an 'in-between time'. From this week's first reading we are reminded that the expectation of a Messiah was a very long-standing hope for Israel. The coming of the Messiah would usher in a new prosperity and a divine reign of God. The earliest Christians began to see that the ancient prophecies could all be applied to Jesus and they began to regard Jesus as the promised Messiah – the fulfilment of prophecy. However, Jesus also promised that he would come again, and the expectation of the first followers of Jesus was that his return would be in their lifetime. In our second reading from the letter to the Thessalonians, we can see the growing realisation that perhaps Jesus' return will not occur within the current generation. This realisation had a dramatic effect on the life and faith of the community. Imagine living with the belief that the end of time was going to occur not just in your lifetime but literally any day now. Slowly, they realised that Jesus' words were not that specific and the time of return had not been identified. What Jesus had called for was a state of readiness, a state of preparedness. This didn't mean he was coming immediately; what it meant was that there was need to get the house in order because he would be coming at some time. Advent is a time to remember that we still haven't really got the house in order.

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The Living Word

First Sunday of Advent, Year C

28 November 2021

First Reading Jer 33:14-16

I will cause a good seed to spring forth from David.

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I am going to fulfil the promise I made to the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

'In those days and at that time,
I will make a virtuous Branch grow
for David,
who shall practise honesty and
integrity in the land.
In those days Judah shall be saved
and Israel shall dwell in confidence.
And this is the name the city will be
called:
The Lord-our-integrity.'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 24:4-5. 8-9. 10. 14. R. v.1

(R.) To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

1. Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and
teach me:
for you are God my saviour. (R.)
2. The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who
stray,
he guides the humble in the right
path;
he teaches his way to the poor. (R.)

3. His ways are faithfulness and love
for those who keep his covenant
and will.
The Lord's friendship is for those
who revere him;
to them he reveals his covenant. (R.)

Second Reading 1 Thes 3:12-4:2

When Christ comes may he strengthen your hearts in holiness.

May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.

Finally, brothers, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation Ps 84:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation.**

Alleluia!