

Jesus Is Coming!

Jer. 33: 14-16; Ps. 25; 1 Thess. 3: 12-4: 2; Lk. 21: 25-28, 34-36

Advent is an exciting time. It is the one season that the secular world and the world of the Church are united. This Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent. We have passed the momentous event of Black Friday which means that the preparations for Christmas will move into high gear. After Sunday, there are only twenty-six more days before Christmas!

Advent is also a confusing time. The secular world, if it remembers the reason for the season, is preparing for Christmas Day; the birthday of Jesus and His coming into the world for the first time. Meanwhile, the Christian world, while it remembers and celebrates the birth of Jesus, focuses on the promised second coming of Jesus into the world when 'He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead'. Therefore, the preparations of the two 'worlds' take on different dimensions.

In the First Reading for this Sunday, the Israelites had been conquered and large numbers of them had been captured and taken to Babylon. Jerusalem was in ruins. The Israelites were praying for someone to lead them back to their homeland and to restore the nation's glory. Through His prophet, God promised the Israelites that He would send them someone from the line of King David to bring them justice and to save them. The Israelites hoped that this would happen soon, but they had to wait hundreds of years for Jesus to be born. When He did arrive, Jesus was not a powerful king that would restore the glory of Israel. He came in humility.

In the Gospel, Jesus describes the events that will surround His second coming. It is like an action movie with so many cosmic special effects that will cause fear and confusion in the hearts and minds of the people. But He tells His followers not to cower in fear. He tells them to be alert and on guard when the signs point to His coming so they will be prepared to face Him and not be caught by surprise when He comes to gather His faithful followers to Himself.

The term Advent comes from the Latin 'adventus' which means an approach, a coming, or an arrival. It was used to signify the official arrival or coming of a king or God. The Israelites had to wait six hundred years before the words of Jeremiah were fulfilled at the birth of Jesus. We have been waiting almost two thousand years for Jesus return. How much longer will we have to wait? Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour. Even He did not know. Only the Father knows. So the Advent season is a time of waiting.

Like the people of Jeremiah's era who had to wait for an unspecified length of time for Jesus' arrival, we also are waiting for Jesus to come back into the world on a date and time that we cannot predict, even though many have tried down through the ages.

What should we do while we are waiting? Jesus said: 'When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?' Jesus left us on the earth to wait for Him, faithfully following His commandment to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind and to love our neighbour as ourself. We are to carry on His mission of love in the world, always having faith in Him. If we do this, we will have no reason to fear when He comes again in glory and we will meet Him face-to-face.