ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

COLLECT

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING — Is 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

You, Lord, yourself are our Father,
'Our Redeemer' is your ancient name.
Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways
and harden our hearts against fearing you?
Return, for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your inheritance.
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down
– at your Presence the mountains would melt.
No ear has heard,
no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for those who trust him.
You guide those who act with integrity
and keep your ways in mind.
You were angry when we were sinners;
we had long been rebels against you.
We were all like men unclean,
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.
We have all withered like leaves
and our sins blew us away like the wind.
No one invoked your name
or roused himself to catch hold of you.
For you hid your face from us
and gave us up to the power of our sins.
And yet, Lord, you are our Father;
we the clay, you the potter,
we are all the work of your hand.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Ps 79:2-3,15-16,18-19

Response:
God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

1. O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **(R.)**
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **(R.)**
3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name. **(R.)**

SECOND READING — 1 Cor 1:3-9

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL — Mk 13:33-37

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life. Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence. For what will not a genuine friend perform? What pleasure will he not afford? What benefit? What security? Though you should name infinite treasures, none of them is comparable to a genuine friend.

Saint John Chrysostom

redemptorist publications

Concordat cum originali: + Eamon Martin Archbishop of Armagh. Commentary by Fr. Gerard Moloney CSsR. The English translation of the entrance and communion antiphons, the opening prayers, prayers over the gifts, gloria, creed, and prayers after communion from The Roman Missal, © 2010 International Commission of English in the Liturgy Corporation. Jerusalem Bible version of the scriptures copyright: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., and Doubleday & Co. Inc. Responsorial psalms are copyright The Grail and/or Geoffrey Chapman Ltd. Published in Ireland by Redemptorist Communications (www.redcoms.org); Published in the UK by Redemptorist Publications (www.rpbooks.co.uk)

Redemptorist Communications

Sunday Message

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD



The word Advent is derived from the Latin adventus, meaning "coming," and refers to the four-week period of preparation for Christmas. Adventus is, in turn, a Latin translation of the Greek word parousía, which refers to the future coming or return of Jesus.

During the Season of Advent, we contemplate two different comings of Jesus into our world. The first refers to his birth over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. The second refers to his future return in glory as judge at the end of time.

The theme of the readings during Advent is the preparation for Jesus' second coming at the end of time, while remembering his birth in Bethlehem.

There are many things in life that keep our attention fixed on the here and now – economic challenges, war and conflict in many parts of the world, our efforts to make ends meet, along with all the other day-to-day cares of living.

The Season of Advent calls for our hope-filled attention. It reminds us that, as daunting as our day-to-day worries are, we ultimately place our hope in the ever-loving and compassionate God. That is why with all Christians down through the ages we can cry out yet again in the Aramaic language of Jesus: "Marana'tha, Come, O Lord!". ■

DO

Make Advent a special time for your family. Prepare an Advent wreath. Decorate it. Pray around it each day.

SAY

"Lord, help me to be aware of your presence with me today and every day. Amen."

PRAY

Pray that throughout the Advent season the Lord will open your heart to the real meaning of Christmas, so that when Christ comes, you will be filled with a joy so strong it will remain with you forever.

LEARN

The season of Advent offers us an opportunity to stand back from the regular routine of life to reflect on our relationship with God and with each other. It is a time to be more conscious of God's presence, so that he will find us ready and waiting when he comes.

Being a faithful disciple does not simply happen. It requires care, attention, prayer, penance and constant watchfulness



REFLECT

One of the wonderful things about the seasons of the liturgical year is the sense of time, of journey, of pilgrimage.

Christianity has a particular sense of time. We journey. We move through the seasons of Advent and Lent with our eyes firmly fixed on Christmas and Easter.

For Christians committed to the celebration of the liturgical calendar, time has a spiralling dynamic that invites us to recall the past, abide in the present, and hope for a future in God's heavenly kingdom. You could say that for us time is supple and elastic, bending and folding, reaching back and stretching forward, proceeding towards its climax in an unimaginable eternity.

The season of Advent conjures up a special kind of triple waiting. We wait for the Christ who appeared in an obscure town in a faraway corner of the Roman Empire 2000 years ago. We wait for his coming in this in-between time to draw us ever more closely to him. And we wait for his return in glory as judge at the end of time. Advent, you could say, is a veritable school for Christian waiting.

The Advent wreath and Advent calendar symbolise this Advent waiting. Each newly lit candle, each newly unveiled day, is a symbol of time passing, a visual reminder of our journey through these four weeks, and the manifestation of our hope, born in a stable, sealed with Mary's kiss.

The liturgical seasons remind us that we Christians have a different way of viewing time, of measuring history. We work to build God's kingdom, but the complete transformation of humanity will not happen during history but only at its culmination in the embrace of God at the end of time. Only then will everything be subjected to Christ.

Our journey through these four weeks is an opportunity to reflect on how we use time and whether we use it wisely. Notwithstanding how young, old, or fit we are, we should live each day with the end in mind, asking how we wish to spend the time that is remaining to us.

Do I live each day purposefully? Are there obstacles or distractions that prevent me from putting God first? It's a call to always remember Advent's admonition: Stay attentive! Stay focused! Don't get distracted! Remember what's truly important. ■