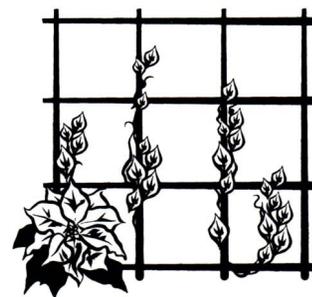


1st Sunday of Advent C

*May the Lord be generous in increasing your love
and make you love one another
and the whole human race. (1 Th 3:12)*



First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

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."

Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2

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 and sisters, 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.

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."

Meditation

Advent opens with the proclamation of its perennial promise: the Lord will come. We enter into the season of paradox, when we celebrate the long vigil we are keeping in preparation for the one who has already come.

The first Christian community lived the tension between the two comings of the Lord: that of his earthly ministry and that of his return at the end of time. In preparation for this Parousia of the Son of Man, which they believed to be imminent, they felt a necessity to establish themselves firmly in a holiness beyond reproach. But the Christians whom Luke addresses begin to witness the growth of a new awareness. Although Jesus is always present in the community and he comes for each person at the moment of death, the final coming is not yet. The wait is longer than anticipated. Therefore the attitude demanded of the faithful is one of permanent vigilance: to be ready for anything, to refuse the evil committed in darkness, to stay awake through unceasing prayer. Just as the eucharist has as its goal to proclaim the death of the Lord "until he comes" (1 Co 11:26), so also do vigilance and prayer open us to the coming of the reign of God. They call us to stand up and raise our heads by giving us the task of putting a name on human expectation.