

Homily of First Sunday of Advent Year A, 2022

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122:1-9; Roman 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

Advent is a season observed in the Catholic Church as a time of special soul-searching and spiritual reawakening to mark the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent season is a journey of preparing and welcoming the "Word Made Flesh" to renew his dwelling in each person and in the world. The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means *coming*.

The Advent wreath further explains the meaning of Advent season:

The green wreath in circle shape symbolizes eternity of God and everlasting life (Psalm 90:2). Candle light symbolizes Jesus, the light of the world (John 8:12).

The four candles symbolize the four weeks of Advent:

The first purple candle is called Candle of Hope. "In his name the nations will put their hope" (Matthew 12:21).

The second purple candle is called Candle of Peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

The third candle, pink in color, is called Candle of Joy. "Fear not, for I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people" (Luke 2:10).

The fourth purple candle, which is the fourth candle, is called Candle of Love. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

It is important to observe, however, that wreaths were used by many ancient cultures but the use Advent wreath in churches is said to have begun among the Lutherans in the 16th century, and from there spread to other churches.

Prophet Isaiah, in the first reading, presents the following Advent journey invitation: "Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths... Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord." This is a soul-searching invitation. The prophet tells us the transformation which those who make this journey faithfully will receive: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." This means, they will be transformed from being weapons of crises, division and hate to instruments of reconciliation, peace, and harmony. Isaiah promises that they will "walk in the light of the Lord."

The purple color of candles, vestments, and decorations are an invitation to prayer, penance, and conversion. The Advent journey not only prepares us for the renewal of the dwelling of Jesus in our lives, the Advent journey, also, prepares us for Jesus' coming to take us to our eternal home. In the gospel, Jesus invites us, "Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. ... you must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

St. Paul, further, tells us that Advent season is a time "to awake from sleep," "throw off works of darkness and put on the armor of light." It is time to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the desires of the flesh." St. Paul mentions some of the desires of the flesh: "orgies and drunkenness," "promiscuity and lust," "rivalry and jealousy."

Also, during Advent season, we are encouraged to undertake works of charity which can bring hope, peace, joy, and love in the life of others. In Luke's Gospel, when the crowd asked John the Baptist, "What then should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise" (Luke 3:10-11).

The Advent journey, therefore, is:

A time of special soul-searching and spiritual reawakening.

A time of prayer, penance, and conversion.

A time to transform from being weapons of crises, division, and hate to instruments of reconciliation, peace, and harmony.

A time to undertake works of charity that can bring hope, peace, joy, and love in the life of others.

A time to throw off works of darkness, put on the armor of light, and walk in the light of the Lord.

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