

Homily of First Sunday of Advent Year A

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 comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means *coming*. 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 Advent wreath further explains to us the meaning of Advent season:

Circle symbolizes eternity of God.

Green wreath symbolizes life everlasting.

Candle light symbolizes Jesus, the light of the world (John 8:12).

Four candles symbolize the four weeks of Advent.

1st purple candle is called candle of hope. "In his name the nations will put their hope" (Matthew 12:21).

2nd purple candle is called candle of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

3rd pink candle is called candle of joy. Concerning Jesus, the angel said to the shepherds, "Fear not, for I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people" (Luke 2:10).

4th purple 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).

Purple color of candles, vestments and decorations are an invitation to prayer, penance and conversion.

Prophet Isaiah in the first reading issues the following Advent journey invitation to us: "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 an invitation to soul searching. The prophet, also, spells out the transformation that 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 transform from being weapons of crises, division and hate to instruments of reconciliation, peace and unity.

St. Paul in the second reading 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 a 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."

The Advent journey not only prepares us for the renewal of the dwelling Jesus in our lives but prepares us for his coming to take us to our eternal home. The Gospel says, "Stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." We reflected so much on this theme on the Thirty-Second and Thirty-Third Sundays of Ordinary Time Year C.

Finally, during Advent season, we are encouraged to undertake works of charity that can bring hope, peace, joy and love in the life of others. Let us be guided by the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35-36; 45, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me." "Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me."

Advent journey, therefore, is:

A time of special soul searching and spiritual reawakening.

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

A time to throw off works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

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

A time of prayer, penance and conversion.

A time of spiritual advancement.

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