

First Sunday of Advent – Year C

[Reading I: Jeremiah 33:14-16](#)

[Responsorial Psalm: 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14](#)

[Reading II: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2](#)

[Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/112821.cfm#main-content>



The season of Advent begins the liturgical year. Advent means to come. The church reflects on the various comings of Christ. There was the historical coming in time at Bethlehem when he was born of Mary. Jesus also comes into our lives in many ways each day through prayer, sacraments, and the Christian community. Jesus will also come at the end of time when God's reign will be fully revealed.

The Cycle of Sunday readings is divided into three years. The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of each cycle. During the coming year, most of the gospel passages proclaimed will be from the Gospel according to St Luke. Luke stresses the compassion of God, care for the poor, the presence of women in Jesus' ministry, salvation for all people, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It was written in the 80s as the Christian community is establishing itself as a distinct community from Judaism.

The gospel passage for the First Sunday of Advent comes from the later part of Luke's gospel. Jesus has arrived in Jerusalem, and his crucifixion is near. He is asked earlier in the chapter about when the Temple will be destroyed. He affirms that it will be destroyed and accompanied by suffering and subservience to the Gentiles. These verses will be read next November.

In the verses we read, Jesus then turns to the end of the world. It is written in apocalyptic style. Apocalyptic literature was popular in the period from 200 years before Jesus until about 200 years after him. It is addressed to people who are suffering to offer them hope. It assures them that evil will not win. God always triumphs. It uses cosmic images to express that humanity can not defeat evil; only God can subdue it. These themes are expressed in verse 25: "There will be signs in the sun, the moon and the stars"; Verse 28: "stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand."

Jesus teaches that humans are called to be aware and attentive. He invites us to be vigilant. One way to be vigilant is by nurturing one's relationship with God through prayer and scripture reading. Prayer is two-way communication, just as in any relationship. One shares what is essential or a question that one has. Then one listens to the response. We can share all that is of concern to us with God. One must then be alert and attentive to God's response. It may be in a few words or a memory that comes that come to mind. It could be in something one reads or a message that comes in a conversation with a friend. When we fill life with random activities, worry and anxiety over what might happen, or numb ourselves with substances, we avoid God. Staying vigilant and alert is our call each day.

In the passage from Jeremiah, some of the same themes arise. The people are about to be exiled to Babylon. Jeremiah calls them to remain faithful to God, who will always be faithful to them. Even though there will be a cleansing, God will be faithful to the promise God made to the people of Judah. The sign of God's faithfulness will be the coming of a new king who will bring a time of peace and safety. Like Luke's audience, they were in a time of suffering but needed to stay attentive so that they could cooperate with God.

The second reading from First Thessalonians seeks to encourage the people who had expected Jesus to have returned already. They were upset about the delay. Paul's response is to challenge them to live virtues and show love for each other. If they do, they will be ready to share in the reign of God whenever it comes.

Key themes:

Hope, particularly in times of struggle, suffering, or persecution

Awareness of the truly essential things in life

Avoidance of those things that numb one's mind and heart

Fidelity in our relationship with God

Showing love for each other as God commanded us

Reflection Questions

How do you respond to suffering and chaos in your life?

How does God help you in difficult times?

What are the things that draw your attention away from suffering and difficulty, and fill up your time and attention?

What practices help you stay in a relationship with God each day?

What are some ways that you can better express your love for others in the days ahead?