

November 29, 2020

First Sunday of Advent

Is 63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7

1 Cor 1:3-9

Mk 13:33-37

GROW: Sometimes I grow nostalgic for the laid-back Advents of my childhood: making a list for Santa, digging into the perforated cardboard Advent calendar for chocolate for breakfast, and lighting the Advent wreath (fire!) each Sunday. We all know, however, that the season can quickly become usurped by things to do – shopping, family, cleaning, etc. Today's readings remind us that this is not what Advent is about. The tone in our Scriptures which begin the Advent season is not subtle. Isaiah asks God to return, to "rend the heavens and come down" – to save and deliver his people. The psalm is equally adamant: "Lord, make us turn to you." We, as a Church, are waiting for the fullness of the Kingdom on earth, and we must prepare.

GO: I'm a cradle Catholic, but for me, Advent was always about waiting to celebrate the birth of Christ. I love pulling out the Nativity scene and lighting the candles each week leading to the celebration of Christ's birth. Only in recent years have I grown in awareness of the dual meaning of Advent – that we Christians also are waiting for Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. I admit, it's always seemed to me something far into the future and perhaps not applicable to my lifetime here on earth. However, as Jesus reminds us in the Gospel, "You do not know when the Lord of the house is coming." And while this is true, it not something to fear, but something to prepare for and look forward to! We wait in joyful hope, asking for the grace to remain faithful to our baptism and to live in a way that makes Christ's presence known to others.

STUDY: Remember the pre-pandemic holidays? Chances are, you've got some extra time on your hands this season. Why not use it to take a deeper dive into Advent this year, by participating in an online Bible study or reading and praying with the Scriptures each day of Advent.