

1st Sunday of Advent; C

God Himself has promised us salvation. God Himself promises to watch over us and to be with us. God never promises us that everything will be wonderful and that we will have everything that we want. Instead, God promises us freedom from sin and life everlasting. These are probably not very exciting ideas in our present age, when no one believes in sin. At least it often appears that way.

Advent is a time for a new beginning. Each of us can look into his or her heart and wonder if we are truly seeking God. The more that we seek to follow Jesus Christ, it seems, the more we realize that we are sinners. This awareness does not make us feel sad about ourselves. Instead, it simply helps us understand that we fall short of what He invites us to live. So as we follow Him, we realize more and more that we need the forgiveness of our sins.

The Book of Jeremiah gives us the goal for this Advent. The Lord is our justice. It is not the present world that is our justice. It is not the political parties, wherever we are, that are justice. Only God is justice. Only Jesus Christ is justice.

We know what Jesus calls us to live. All we have to do is open our hearts and our minds. The present world wants to change Jesus words so that whatever civil society calls holy is now holy. This is not the Word of the Lord. The Word of the Lord Jesus is always clear: Repent and

believe the Gospel. Live in purity. Live in love of one another, but a chaste love. Serve the poor. Love your enemies. Seek God in all things.

Today's Gospel reading warns us that the end can come at any time. We have heard this for the past two Sundays, at the end of Ordinary Time. Be vigilant at all times is what we need to hear. Not because we must live in fear, but because we want to grow in love. When the end comes, we want to be people of love.

Advent is the time to prepare our hearts once again so that Christ can continue His life within each one of us. He wants to possess us entirely and invites us to follow Him. If we follow Him, we become strangers to the ways of the world. It is a process. Sometimes He demands that we follow Him immediately. At other times, He invites us. Sometime we cannot resist His call. At other times, we are uneasy about being so radical.

May this Advent transform our lives so that we become completely faithful in the following the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**