



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Loving Father, As we begin this new Season of Grace, fill us with the joyful virtue of hope. Help us to long for Your Son Jesus with love in our hearts. Let us remain faithful until He returns in glory. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7

The Season of Advent marks the beginning of a new Liturgical Year. As we begin this year, we are reminded to have our eyes and hearts set on the Lord who will come again in glory.

Our First Reading reminds us that, in ages past, people had called out to the Lord - as we do today - to give them aid. Without God to heal them from their sinfulness, they were wandering aimlessly. They called for the Lord to come.

And, so the Lord did come.

Our Catholic faith professes that the Lord not only came to us, but He died for us, He rose for us, and He would come again to bring us to Himself. Our Advent Season reminds us to eagerly await his return with steadfast faith.

Advent is a Season of hope knowing that Christ will come again. He has not disappointed us thus far, so our hope is not in vain.

Hope is one of the three theological virtues. Faith and love are the other two. In the end, these three remain. As we begin this new year within this Season of Advent, let us put the virtue of hope to work in our lives.

Question

In what way do you hope in the Lord?

Commentary

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 1:3-9

Advent is not only a time to remember the virtue of hope. It is also a time for us to rekindle our faith.

This faith begins with God who, as St. Paul reminds us, "is faithful" Himself.

Indeed, it would be difficult for Paul to encourage the Corinthians as they await the Lord's return unless they had a sense that God was faithful toward them.

Indeed, the whole Advent message is about God's fidelity toward us. God hears our cry, He comes to our aid, He dies and rises for us, and he remains with us (especially

in the Sacraments) until the final revelation of His glory.

Why else would we believe in God unless He was faithful to us first?

Why else would we hope in God, unless He entrusted Himself to us first?

Why else would we love God unless He loved us first?

Question

How has the Lord been faithful to you?

Are you interested in receiving free commentaries for your own personal or group reflections during this 4-week series and throughout the year?

**Visit:
dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood**

1st Sunday of Advent

Commentary

Gospel: Mark 13:33-37

As we begin a new Church Year, we begin a new Cycle of Readings. Last year, we read from the Gospel of Matthew. Next year, we will read from the Gospel of Luke. This year, we will read from the Gospels of Mark and John.

Our Gospel today reminds us that the Lord will return in glory. However, we do not know when. Therefore, we must always be watchful and alert!

Unfortunately, for many, being watchful and alert means trying to second guess the Lord as to when and where He will arrive.

The verse before our Gospel passage this Sunday (vs 32) has Jesus say, "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

True faith, hope, and love for God does not depend on a future date. Faithfulness, hope, and love for God begins now!

Question

Are you preparing to love God when the Lord comes, or are you loving God now?

This Week's Task

As you prepare for Christmas, what spiritual gift will you offer a friend, family member, or neighbor?

Consider giving them a gift of Christ in Our Neighborhood. Invite them to join you this Season of Advent to break open the Holy Scriptures and reflect on the Word of God who came to set us free.

Consider one or both of the following:

- 1) Forward your friends the link to dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood via facebook, instagram, or twitter.
- 2) Invite your friends to group with you for the four weeks of Advent.

Group Prayer

Pray or sing this traditional Advent hymn:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

The prayer continues with Psalm 80

Psalm

**Response: Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine
forth.
Rouse your power,
and come to save us.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Once again, O LORD of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

May your help be with the man of your right hand,
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Conclude with an Our Father