

First Sunday of Advent:

3 December 2017

“And this do, understanding the time, for it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we came to believe.” Rom. 13:11

Dom Prosper Gueranger in his book, *The Liturgical Year Vol. 1: Advent* comments: **“If ...we would penetrate into the profound mystery which occupies the mind of the Church during this season, we find that this mystery of the coming, or Advent, of Jesus is at once simple and threefold. It is simple, for it is the one same Son of God that is coming; it is threefold, because He comes at three different times and in three different ways. ‘In the first coming,’ says St. Bernard, ‘He comes in the flesh and in weakness; in the second, He comes in spirit and in power; in the third, He comes in glory and majesty; and the second coming is the means whereby we pass from the first to the third.’ This, then, is the mystery of Advent. Let us now listen to the explanation of this threefold visit of Christ, given to us by Peter of Blois, in his third *Sermon de Adventu*: ‘There are three comings of our Lord; the first in the flesh, the second in the soul, the third at judgement. The first was at midnight, according to those words of the Gospel: ‘*At midnight there was a cry made, ‘Lo the Bridegroom cometh!’ Mt. 25:6* But this first coming is long since past, for Christ has been seen on the earth and has conversed among men. We are now in the second coming, provided only we are such as that He may thus come to us; for He has said that if we love Him, He will come unto us and will take up His abode with us (cf. Jn.14:23). So that this second coming is full of uncertainty to us; for who, save the Spirit of God, knows them that are of God! They are raised out of themselves by the desire of heavenly things, know indeed when He comes; but when He cometh or whither He goeth, they know not. As for the third coming, it is most certain that it will be, most uncertain when it will be; for nothing is more sure than death and nothing less sure than the hour of death. When they shall say, peace and security says the apostle, then shall sudden destruction come upon them as the pains upon her that is with child, and they shall not escape. So that the first coming was humble and hidden, the second is mysterious and full of love; the third will be majestic and terrible. In His first coming, Christ was judged by men unjustly; in his second, He**

renders us just by His grace; in His third, He will judge all things with justice. In His first, a lamb; in his last a lion; in the one in between the two, the tenderest of friends.” Gueranger, p. 28-9

The Coming of the Messiah

The prophet Isaiah tells of the coming peace the Messiah will bring not only to the Jews but to the whole world. *“It will be a great time for all peoples: ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the House of God of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in his paths.”* Is 2:3 Today’s *Gradual*, Ps. 24:3-4 uses veiled language to tell us the times in which the Messiah will come: **“All they that wait on Thee shall not be confounded, O Lord. Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me: and teach me Thy paths.”** All those who trust in the promises of God about the coming Messiah will not be confounded especially since they pray that God will teach them His ways and His paths. All the world is in readiness. This is what St. Paul tells the Romans in today’s Epistle (Rom. 13:11-14).

The Middle Coming of the Spirit of God

In the *Epistle to the Romans*, St Paul spells out for us what we must do to live in the peace of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who will come into our lives through His grace by the Holy Spirit. This second (or Middle Coming) is what Peter of Blois says: **“They are raised out of themselves by the desire for heavenly things.”** St. Paul reminds us that now is the time to repent and think of the heavenly things of the light: *“The night is far advanced: the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.”* Rom. 13:12. We all need to realize that time goes by very fast and that we should not remain in the darkness of sin. We need to **“Put on the armour of light”** which is to say, **“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”** Rom 13:12-14. We need to give up sin which keeps us in darkness: **“Let us walk becomingly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy.”** Rom. 13:13 Sin is the only real evil in the world and when man sins, he becomes unhappy! He is in great darkness! Sin never makes us happy! Those who sin become **“slaves of sin.”** Jesus told us this when He said, **“Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.”** Jn. 8:34 This is why St. Paul tells us that true happiness and true freedom can only be achieved by living a virtuous life through imitating Jesus Christ

and avoiding sin: ***“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and as for the flesh take no thought for its lusts.”*** Rom. 13:14 We need to put on Jesus’ holiness. The Church reminds us in today’s *Alleluia* verse that Jesus will help us because He has come to save us: ***“Show, O Lord, Thy mercy; and grant us Thy salvation.”***

“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and glory.” Lk. 21: 27

The final advent or Third Coming (according to Peter of Blois) in this Advent Season is the final redemption of the world with the coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the world. The Gospel (Luke 21:23-33) today takes on apocalyptic overtones with Jesus’ prophecy of the end of the world: ***“And there will be signs in the sun and the moon and the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations bewildered by the roaring of the sea and waves; men fainting for fear and expectation of the things that are coming to the world; for the powers of heaven will be shaken.”*** Lk. 21:25-6 It is very clear to see how the whole world, the sun, the moon, the stars and the sea will reveal a time when men will be faint with fear at the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus Christ, true God and true man, will not come as the meek and humble babe as He did the first time in Bethlehem. He will come as an all-powerful and just judge. The whole universe will testify to His power: ***“the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.”*** (Mt. 24:29) And Jesus will come on clouds and in glory surrounded by a multitude of angels: ***“And then they will see the Son of Man coming upon a cloud with great power and majesty.”*** Lk. 21:27 In order to be ready for Jesus’ coming, we must, as St. Paul says in today’s epistle, be ready: ***“Brethren, knowing that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, put on the armour of light.”*** Rom. 12:11-12

St. Teresa’s Advent Prayer for Jesus

Let us pray with St. Teresa of Avila: ***“O my God, Word of the Father, Word made flesh for love of us, You assumed a mortal body in order to suffer and be immolated for us. I wish to prepare for Your coming with the burning desires of the prophets and the just who in the Old Testament sighed after You, the one Saviour and Redeemer. ‘O Lord, send Him whom You are going to send... As you have promised, come and***

deliver us!’ I want to keep Advent in my soul, that is, a continual longing and waiting for this great Mystery wherein You, O Word became flesh to show me the abyss of your redeeming sanctifying mercy....Come, O Lord, come! I, too wish to run to You with love, but alas! My love is so limited, weak, and imperfect! Make it strong and generous; enable me to overcome myself, so that I can give myself entirely to You... What a consolation it will be, O Lord, at the moment of death to think that we shall be judged by Him whom we have loved above all things! Then we can enter Your presence with confidence, despite the weight of our offenses!” *(The Way, 40)*

CHRISTMAS PRAYER

PRAYER TO OBTAIN FAVORS

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires. Through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen

(It is piously believed that whoever recites the above prayer fifteen times a day from the feast of Saint Andrew (30th Nov.) until Christmas will obtain what is asked.)

First Friday, 1 December 2017

There is no better way of honouring the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus than in receiving Holy Communion on the **“Nine First Fridays.”** The Sacred Heart of Jesus told St. Margaret Mary: ***“I promise thee, in the excessive mercy of My heart, that its all-powerful will accord to all those who shall receive Communion on nine successive First Fridays the grace of final penance. They shall not die in disfavour with God, nor without the sacraments, since My divine heart is their assured refuge in this last moment.”***

The Five First Saturdays

This Saturday, 2 December is the First Saturday of December. Our Lady told Sr. Lucia in 1925 **"...I promise to assist at the hour of death, with all the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the first Saturday of five consecutive months go to confession and receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary and keep me company for a quarter of an hour while meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the intention of making reparation to me."** If only we would do what Our Lady asks, we would be assured of eternal salvation. Our Lady promises us all the graces necessary for our salvation if we keep The **Five First Saturdays!**