

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 14
1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

1st Sunday of Advent
November 29, 2009

Word: **Redemption is at hand for those who are vigilant for the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.**

Theme: **We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when we abound in love for one another.** [Love]

Promise: ***“All the paths of the Lord are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”*** (Ps 25:10)

Reflection:

Today we usher in the First Sunday of Advent which serves as a reminder that there is just less than a month before Christmas. To others, it means that the rush is on to trim the tree, put up the twinkling lights around the house, start buying what is needed for the Christmas parties that have become tradition in many Filipino homes, and complete the shopping list for presents. And still for others, it means making the first move to make peace with relatives, that all may enjoy a wonderful family Christmas as Christ intended it to be.

According to the teachings of the Catholic Church, Advent means three things:

1. To prepare ourselves to worthily celebrate the Lord's coming into the world as God of love incarnate.
2. To prepare our souls, by grace, as fitting abode for the coming of the Redeemer through the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
3. To prepare ourselves for the final coming of the Lord as our Judge, either at the moment of our individual death, or at the end of the world, whichever may come first.

Three readings prepare us today to be spiritually uplifted according to above listed goals for the Season of Advent.

In the First Reading from the Old Testament Book of Jeremiah, we read again about God's promise to Abraham and his descendants (Gen 22:15-18) that they would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, that they shall possess the gate of their enemies, and that by Abraham and his offspring shall all the nations on earth be blessed.

Over and above this, God now promises that a righteous branch would spring up from the descendants of King David, the Righteous One who would execute justice and righteousness in the land. While the Jewish people of those days took these

words to mean the coming of a worldly king and kingdom, it was not what God meant. God was referring to a spiritual Kingdom in which Christ, the offspring, would be the First Fruit of many to follow. We see in 1 Cor 15:20, 23, that God speaks of the spiritual Kingdom promised to Abraham, he who was to become the spiritual father of all those who live by faith. In Rom 4:13-8 God speaks of the Mystical Body of Christ.

“For just as the Father has life in Himself, He was going to grant the Son also to have life in Himself,” (Jn 5:26). It follows then that through the mystery of the incarnation, the Father, the Righteous One (Rom 10:3) is going to give all authority (Jn 5:27; 1 Pet 3:22) to His Son, the Righteous One who is being called to execute justice and righteousness in the land. Through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, we, as the living saints of the Holy Catholic Church, will also receive His righteousness. As such, ***“the Lord is our righteousness,”*** (Jer 33:16).

The Gospel Reading echoes the fulfillment of the promises of God the Father through the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. While the Reading appears to contain prophecies of days that are ahead of us, such is not the case. The Gospel of Luke, taken from Chapter 21, verses 25 to 28 and 34 to 36, omits one particular verse of importance, that of Luke 21:32 which states, "Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away, until all things have taken place." Jesus states that all the signs mentioned in the Gospel were to be fulfilled before the passing of the generation in which He lived. As such, the signs must be perceived as referring to the end of the age of the Old Testament and the beginning of the new, the New Covenant He was to make during the Last Supper.

Today's Gospel Reading warns us to be on our guard that our hearts may not be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the worries of this life, that the day of the Lord may not catch us unexpectedly, as in a trap. No one knows when he/she will die! No one knows the appointed time when he/she will appear before the judgment seat of God. As such, no one can prepare himself as one would prepare to go on a holiday, for instance.

Therefore, divine wisdom tells us that we should always be prepared! We should be ready in case the Lord calls us tonight, for instance, during our sleep. Before bedtime tonight, if anything needs to be done, it must be completed. For there may be no tomorrow.

Today's Second Reading from the First Letter to the Thessalonians gives us sound advice as to how to prepare ourselves. Whichever comes first, whether we depart this world before His glorious return, or live to see that great day, we should abound in love for one and all. Our love should not be limited to friends, but should also include our enemies. Neither should love be limited to those whom we can forgive, but also include those whom we have difficulty forgiving. ***“For with the judgment you make you will be judged and the measure you give will be the measure you get.”*** (Mt 7:2)

To be fully prepared, we must have pure hearts so we can stand blameless before our God and Father. To achieve this goal, we must walk with the sanctifying Holy Spirit who disciplines us to increase our holiness. We must maintain pure minds at all times. We must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to maintain our ongoing righteousness by the grace of God, and be nourished by the Holy Eucharist, the Living Bread, in order to inherit the eternal heavenly kingdom promised to the children of God. We must do everything humanly possible to remain in communion with God on a daily basis.

We are indebted to Christ for our redemption, and we cannot allow ourselves to take a break from our living faith. For allowing our human weakness to overcome our spiritual commitment could cost us our blessed hope among the saints and angels in heaven.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we received the gift of a new heart and a new spirit, over and above the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to help and guide us in our spiritual journey. During the coming week, let us embrace a spiritual attitude so the Season of Advent may become something special for us, a true moment of preparation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, or the time of our death, or the last coming of the Lord, whichever may come first.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. How do I relate to my siblings, relatives, as well as brothers and sisters in the parish and in Community, with my co-workers in my workplace? Do I harbor enmity towards anyone? Is there someone in my life whom I despise? Is there anyone I find difficult to love?
2. In my service to the Church and the Community, am I motivated by selfless service, or what I can get out of the Community? Do I strive to bring honor to myself or to God? Do I render service to be seen by others?
3. How do I intend to resolve personal conflicts in my relationship with others and in my service to the Community?

Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

November 30, 2009 (Mon):	Rom 10:9-18; Ps 19:2-5; Mt 4:18-22
December 01, 2009 (Tue):	Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24
December 02, 2009 (Wed):	Is 25:6-10; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 15:29-37
December 03, 2009 (Thur):	Is 26:1-6; Ps 118:1, 8-9, 19-21, 25, 27; Mt 7:21, 24-27
December 04, 2009 (Fri):	Is 29:17-24; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Mt 9:27-31
December 05, 2009 (Sat):	Is 30: 19-21, 23-26; Ps 147:1-6; Mt 9:35, 10:1, 6-8

"Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!"