

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Baruch 5:1-9
Psalm 126:1-6
Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11
Luke 3:1-6

2nd Sunday of Advent
December 6, 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 repent of our sins.** [Repentance]

Promise: ***“Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*** (Lk 3:5 & 6)

Reflection:

During Advent season, we are confronted with the challenge of preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ. We tend to confuse the spiritual message of the season with the commercial aspects of the celebration. And so we go on frenzied shopping sprees looking for bargains and gifts to give to those close to us – family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, officemates. We over-extend our budget; even over-spend on our credit cards so that no one will be left out in the gift-giving. We buy expensive and colorful ornaments because our neighbors have brighter Christmas decorations. We scour the supermarkets for rich and expensive food – ham, cheeses, imported fruits which we normally don't eat -- just to impress guests. In the midst of all this rush, we overlook our spiritual well being. Soon the significance of Christmas is lost to us. We no longer yearn for the coming of the Christ Child, let alone look forward to His final coming to us. We become engrossed in endless parties, and forget the reason for the celebration.

We could make Advent a fruitful time for our spiritual lives. The morning chill should remind us of the peace and serenity that is the Prince of Peace personified. His Word says: ***“Be still and know that I am God, supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth,”*** (Ps 46:10). As we ponder on God and in His Power, He becomes our refuge and strength. As we recall our sinfulness, we lay claim to His mercy and grace, and His river of love will refresh our souls. As we look around us and behold the beauty of His creation, God will still our useless struggles and anxieties. He will gather us in the embrace of His Peace.

The Classic Christmas songs – like Silent Night, O Holy Night, O Little Town of Bethlehem - remind us of how Jesus came to save us from our sinfulness. These carols should inspire us to ponder on that first Christmas Eve, how Jesus, God the Son, came to us in a lowly manger, surrounded by animals, because they had no room for Him at the inn, reflecting on what St. Paul said in Phils 2: 7: ***“Christ Jesus,***

Who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness and found human in appearance.”

Spending time and singing Christmas carols with the family could help us realize the humility that was in Christ Jesus. It is something we should emulate. Advent should also encourage us prepare for a good confession so we can truly welcome Jesus in our hearts on Christmas Day. Repentance begins when, in the stillness of our hearts, we acknowledge we are sinners and that we have not yet fully accepted the love of God. When we recall those sins we have failed to confess, we also recall the instances we have hurt others.

St. John instructs us in the Gospel: ***“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be made low”***. St. Francis de Sales said this about the Gospel reading: *in as much as they represent obstruction, “The crooked shall be made straight, many twisting to be found”. It is penance that will fill up the valleys, lay low the mountains, and make straight the crooked paths. Do penance, says St. John, make low the mountains of pride, fill up these valleys, these ditches of tepidity and cowardice. Fill up the valleys, that is to say, fill your hearts with confidence and hope, because salvation is at hand.’*

St. Paul again reminds us in the second reading that God has already begun the good work in us and He will carry it to completion. His prayer, which can be our prayer too during this Advent season, is that our love for one another may abound not only in our hearts but in our deeds. We need to repent and confess our sins, so that with a clear conscience and blameless conduct, we may learn to value the things that really matter, up to the very day of Christ. So let us all be vigilant for the coming of Jesus not only during the Advent season but for the rest of our lives.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. How do I prepare for the coming of Jesus this Christmas and for His final coming?
2. How can I make my celebration of Christmas more meaningful?

Next Week’s Daily Mass Reading Guide:

December 07, 2009 (Mon):	Is 35:1-10; Ps 85:9-14; Lk 5:17-26
December 08, 2009 (Tue):	Gen 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38
December 09, 2009 (Wed):	Is 40:25-31; Ps 103:1-4, 8, 10; Mt 11:28-30
December 10, 2009 (Thur):	Is 41:13-20; Ps 144:1, 9-13; Mt 11:11-15
December 11, 2009 (Fri):	Is 48:17-19; Ps 1:1-4, 6; Mt 11:16-19
December 12, 2009 (Sat):	Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:29, 12:1-6, 10; Jdt 13:18-19; Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

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