

## IV ADVENT 2015

### SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

PHIL 4.4 ST JOHN 1.19

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It's very late...it's almost night...Jesus is coming in the morning...hurry up...let's get ready...keep the lights on...don't turn them off! It's later than we think...but it's not too late to make some changes in our lives...walk away from sin and darkness...walk toward forgiveness and the Light that is Jesus.

*Advent* means *coming*. During Advent we prepare ourselves for the first coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and for his second coming at the end of time. In his first coming...he came in humility. In his second coming...he will come in power. In his first coming...he came to save. In his second coming...he will come to bring us into his Kingdom.

Advent also calls us to consider as Father Altberg mentioned in his Advent I sermon the four final things...death, judgment, heaven and hell. Death is something we would rather not talk about much less think about...but it can't be avoided. We will all face death some day. There will be a final judgment we will all have to face...scary only to those who are not prepared and try to hide their life from God. Heaven is the promise Jesus makes available to all who believe and practice what he says.

Today's Gospel reflects last week's. Last week John the Baptist sent his followers to ask Jesus if he was the One or if they should look for someone else. In this week's Gospel religious teachers ask John the same question...is he the One...he says in no uncertain terms he is not. John says his role is to be the public relations man for Jesus.

Considering the readings and hymns of the Advent Season we might want to ask the same question..."Are you the One who should come or should we look for someone else?" Jesus said, "John, take a look around." The answer was in the signs and actions of Jesus. Then Jesus said, "Those who have no doubt about me are happy."

So what do we think about Jesus? Do we really believe he is God's Son who came to save us? Do we really believe he has influenced the world and our personal lives?

Simply stated...do we believe in Jesus...or should we be looking for someone else? Does it really matter what we believe about him?

Jesus said those who believe in him are happy. It matters a great deal what we believe about him. And because it matters a great deal what we believe about him...it also matters a great deal how we conduct ourselves. Saint James says talk is cheap...it is not enough to say we believe in Jesus...what matters is what we do!

The Advent Collect, which we were supposed to be saying every day, calls us to turn away from darkness and walk toward light. If we come to Mass angry and full of hate...if we actively sow seeds of discontent in the Parish, in our homes, or any place, we are ignoring the Advent Collect. Duplicity and self-service are rejections of God.

Advent gives us the opportunity to do some serious reflection on our lives...where we are now and where we need to be...and then come up with an action plan for implementing changes that help us do exactly what the Advent Collect says...walk away from sin and darkness and walk toward forgiveness and the Light that is Jesus.

Advent calls us to get our house in order. Death and judgment are unavoidable. Heaven and hell are the available options...the choice is ours. If heaven is our objective...the only answer we can give about Jesus is, "Yes! He is the One!"

Jesus is coming in a few days...let's be ready to greet him..."O come let us adore him. Christ the Lord."

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