

II ADVENT 2018

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

ROMANS 15.4-13 St. LUKE 21.25-33



EVERYTHING WRITTEN IN THE SCRIPTURES WAS WRITTEN TO TEACH US...IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT HAVE HOPE THROUGH THE PATIENCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT... WHICH THE SCRIPTURES GIVE US.

Paul's Letter to the Romans inspired the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent...which was written for the seminal *Book of Common Prayer* of 1549. The Collect gives an unusual tone to this day...we call today "Bible Sunday".

The Collect reinforces what we believe to be true...our hope of eternal life given us in our Savior Jesus Christ...both in his first and second comings...is not something we figured out on our own. It was revealed to us not only in the preaching and teaching of the Old Testament prophets...but through God's written Word.

The hope we get from reading the Bible is in knowing for certain we will get to be with Jesus in heaven some day. In the Gospel read at a Requiem Mass...Jesus tells us not to worry...he has gone to his Father's house to get a place ready for us...and one day he will come back to take us to be where he is.

The Collect tells us everything in the Scriptures is written for our learning...if we are to learn from the Scriptures...we must read them...all of us must read them...not just the clergy! There are 80 books in the Bible. A question that often gets asked...where to begin? It seems reading the whole Bible is a daunting task.

It would be a daunting task if we decided to try to read all 80 books of the Bible during Advent or Lent. We might get through the first ten chapters of Genesis...and then give up. There's a better way.

The Lectionary at the front of the *Book of Common Prayer* is our Bible Study guide. Through the Offices of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer...we get a systematic and orderly way of reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting the Scriptures throughout the Church Year...beginning with Advent Sunday and taking us to the Sunday Next

Before Advent...then we get to start over again.

If we follow the Lectionary we will read through most of the Bible during the course of the Church Year...and we will read through the Psalms about twice. The Psalter...as printed in the *Book of Common Prayer*...is divided into a 30-day cycle of readings for Morning and Evening Prayer. If we choose to read the Psalms this way...we will read them 12 times during the year. In some monastic orders...all 150 Psalms were read...every day!

Most of us first learned about Jesus and how much he loves us in Sunday School. There is a children's song that tells the story in simple words even an adult can understand..."Jesus loves me...this I know...for the Bible tells me so". The Scriptures are meant for all of us...we should not be afraid to pick up a Bible and start reading...so we might have hope.

The Advent Season is about us getting ready for the first coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and preparing for his second coming. Jesus tells us in the Gospel we will know when he is coming back because there will be lots of signs. Earthquakes, floods, and famines will take place. Countries will fight wars with each other. Some people will be so afraid they will faint.

There have been "signs" all along...since the Ascension. What we learn from Jesus' own words is we are in the end times now...and because we have hope...we don't need to have fear. Only those who aren't prepared or who don't want Jesus to return will have fear. Jesus tells us not to worry about what we see happening. Instead...we are to stand up and raise up our heads...our salvation is near!

The Scriptures lay out God's plan for saving us through Jesus. We should pay attention to the Collect and read the Bible every day...and remember...

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