

IV ADVENT 2020

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FATHER CRAIG LOONEY

PHIL 4.4-7 ST JOHN 1.19-28

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It's very late...but not too late...to make some changes in our lives. It's time to put off the things of darkness...and put on the armor of light. Jesus is coming soon...let's get ready to welcome him.

It's time to get rid of the things holding us back from running the race set before us...and with God's power and might run the race with confidence toward the finish line...and not look back.

During Advent we have been preparing ourselves for the First Coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and for his Second Coming at the end of time.

At his First Coming...Jesus came in humility...not in blazing flashes...but rather with a fragile flame...a baby. At his Second Coming...Jesus will come in power and bright white light. At his First Coming...he came to save. At his Second Coming...he will come to bring us into his Kingdom.

In this Fourth Sunday in Advent we are again called to consider last things first...the four final things...death, judgment, heaven and hell...

...We will all face death some day.
...There will be a final judgment during which our lives will become open books...a scary only for those who like the darkness and try to hide their lives from God.
...Heaven is the promise Jesus makes available to all who believe in him and follow his teachings and example.
...Hell is the other place.

Jesus is coming in a few days...the Advent Season compels us to ask ourselves...is he really the One who through his birth, life, death and Resurrection has set things right with God on our behalf...or should we be looking for someone else?

In last week's Gospel, John the Baptist sent his followers to ask Jesus the same is he the One or should we look for someone else? This week's Gospel is a prequel to last week's. Some religious teachers ask John the same question he asked Jesus...is he the One?

John says his role is to be the public relations man for Jesus. He says he is not the One...he is the Messenger the Prophet Malachi said would come first...he is the voice of someone shouting in the desert as Isaiah prophesied...for people to make a straight path for the Lord to travel.

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, "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. Talk is cheap...actions speak volumes.

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...turn away from sin and darkness and embrace the love and forgiveness and Light that is Jesus.

We need to pay attention to Malachi, Isaiah and John the Baptist. They all point to Jesus as the One...and no one else.

Jesus is coming in a few days...it's not too late to get ready to greet him.

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