

The First Sunday in Advent  
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish  
Father Craig Looney  
*Romans 13.8-14 St. Matthew 21.1-13*  
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Get stirred up...our Call to Action from last week's Collect for the Sunday before Advent. Get stirred up...wake up...get re-energized...no time to waste...Jesus is coming...sooner than we think!

The Collects for the Advent Wreath Liturgy all continue the Advent theme of getting stirred up...

...O Lord, stir up your might and come to us,  
...O Lord, stir up our hearts so we are ready for your Son's arrival,  
...O Lord, stir up our prayers and lighten the darkness of our minds,  
...O Lord, stir up your power and come; with your great might; give us your grace, help and forgive us.

There is a sense of urgency...and of hope...in the Advent Wreath Liturgy prophecies from Isaiah and Malachi about the coming Messiah...leading us to the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Angel Gabriel' message to Mary...

..."Don't be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

There is also a sense of urgency in the Collect for Advent Sunday. It is one of two Seasonal Collects...the other being the Collect for Ash Wednesday...the *Book of Common Prayer* directs us to say every day during the Season.

In the Collect we ask God to give us grace...his special help...to turn away from darkness and turn back toward light. We want to do this now...while we have time...and not wait. Jesus is coming first in great humility...then on the Last Day in glorious majesty. Glorious...means light! And we look forward to eternal life with Jesus in heaven.

Saint Paul tells us we should walk as Children of the Light that is Christ. We should conduct ourselves properly and not behave in ways that could lead us back into darkness. Instead...

...the only obligation we have to another is to love them,  
...we must not commit adultery,  
...we must not murder,  
...we must not steal,  
...we must be satisfied with what God has given us and not want what belongs to another person.

Everything Saint Paul tells us reinforces the Great Commandment to love God and love others in the same way we want to be loved. These are duties we have toward God and others...we may not check the "opt out box"...there is none.

Advent is about getting ready for Jesus' First Coming at Christmas and his Second Coming at the End of Time. The Gospel for Advent Sunday is the Palm Sunday story about Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This made the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah come true...

..."Tell the city of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you! He is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The story is familiar to us...Jesus goes to the Temple where he finds the merchants charging exorbitant prices. He overturns their tables and brands them thieves who have desecrated God's House. The people had forgotten what it meant to love others.

Advent is about embracing the Light of Christ. We have an Action Plan...let's get stirred up...let's wake up...it's later than we think...but not too late...there is no time to waste...Jesus is coming...let's get ready...while we have time!

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