

First Sunday of Advent

Today we begin the season of Advent; The Latin word "*adventus*" means "coming." In the Christian language it refers to the coming of Jesus Christ. The liturgy of the Church gives the name of Advent to the four weeks that precede Christmas, as an opportunity to prepare ourselves in hope and in repentance for the Lord's arrival. The candle that we will light represents **HOPE** for us.

The liturgical color of this time is **purple** meaning penance.

The time of Advent is a privileged period for Christians because it invites us to remember three important things: first, **the past**, second, it urges us to **live the present** and third, we need to **prepare the future**.

This is the triple purpose of Advent:

First, to remember the past: Thinking of the past helps us to celebrate and contemplate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The Lord has already come and was born in Bethlehem. This was his coming in the flesh, full of humility and poverty. He came as one of us, a man among men. This was his first coming. In the first reading the prophet Isaiah was longing for this moment as he said, "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down." In the Gospels of **Matthew** and **Luke**, **Jesus** tells people who were

present witnessing all his miracles that, “Many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.” (Mt. 13:17 & Lk. 10:24)

Why do we need to remember the past? Because we are not lucky as well, we need to depend in what happened in the past for our sake. We rely totally in the Apostolic Tradition of the Church that handed down to us Jesus Incarnation into the world changing the destiny of the entire world.

Second, Advent helps us to live in the present: It is about living in the present of our daily life the “**presence of Jesus Christ**” in us and, for us, in the world. Live always vigilant, walking in the ways of the Lord, in justice and in love. The only condition if you will, is that Jesus needs to born in our hearts, that is also a type of incarnation of the Son of God, it is an Incarnation that helps us to live, act, react, talk and pray just like Jesus did.

Third, Advent helps us to prepare the future: It is about preparing for the Parousia or second coming of Jesus Christ in the “**majesty of his glory**”. That’s going to be a totally different approach of Jesus; his first coming was in the flesh and humble. In his Second coming Jesus will come as Lord and Judge of all nations, and will reward with heaven those who have believed in Him; lived as faithful children of the Father and good brothers of

others. We await his glorious coming that will bring us salvation and eternal life without suffering.

In the Gospel, **Jesus Christ** speaks several times of the Parousia and tells us that nobody knows the day or the hour in which it will happen. For this reason, the Church invites us in Advent to prepare for this moment through revision and projection:

Revision: Taking advantage of this time to think about how good we have been so far and what we are going to do to be better than before. It is important to know how to stop in life to reflect on our spiritual life and our relationship with God and with our neighbor. Every day we can and should be better.

Projection: In Advent we must make a plan so that we are not only good in Advent but always. Analyze what it is that we work the hardest and make resolutions to avoid falling into the same thing again. Don't lose hope!!!

Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelchina used to say, "Pray, hope and don't worry."