

December 1st A.D. 2013
The First Sunday in Advent

Meditation

Epistle and Gospel Readings for this Sunday

The Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Romans: Chap. 13, Vss. 8 – 14

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew: Chap. 21, Vss. 1 - 13

(1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pages 90 - 92)
(People's Anglican Missal, Pages A2 – A3)



First Sunday in Advent : Page from the Pentwortham Breviary, c. 1310 British Museum, London

The word Advent, means a *coming*. Though we might wish that we could have been present during the life of our Blessed Lord, the reality is that we live 21 centuries later. So, although we cannot be present at the first coming of Christ, we are encouraged by our Holy Mother Church during the period of about four weeks to think about and to long for the coming of Jesus to us all *now*. His Incarnation is the very essence of our faith. He came into the world to lead it back to his Father, Almighty God. During these upcoming weeks, let us beg our Lord to come into our hearts and lead us back to Him again. This is the meaning of Advent, filled as it is with our cries of longing and expectation.

In the Epistle of today's Mass St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, exhorts us to “*awake out of sleep : for now is our salvation nearer than we believed. The night is far spent and the day is at hand.*” This is what the season of Advent should recall to us - a time for an ever deeper appreciation of our goal in this life...spiritual perfection. We should ask ourselves: “ How many Advent seasons have come and gone in our lives and what kind of spiritual profit did we gain from them? How much more has our love of God increased from them?

The past is good only for our reflection, for we live in the *present*. We are reminded today: “*Now it is high time to wake out of sleep.*” This advent should be a time when we *really* reform our lives in preparation for Christ's coming, therefore making our Advent preparation in constant imitation of Jesus Christ, and thus showing our love in actions, and not merely in words. This imitation must be shown in our daily ordinary living: our dealings with others, our conversations with both family, friends, and strangers...and most importantly, in our daily round of prayer.

We should NOT let our past failings and sinfulness discourage us; for we must always impress upon ourselves this basic (and very important) principle...that *discouragement never comes from Christ our Lord*.

Rather, let our past failures and sins impress upon our minds and hearts that of ourselves we do not have much that we can offer in the past, present, or future. All we have is to *fully put our trust* in Jesus...TODAY! Our Blessed Jesus; “*who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross.*” (*Phill. Ch. 6, Vss 6-8*).

The beautiful Introit prayer at the beginning of today's Mass certainly can put us in a proper frame of mind for this Advent season: “*Unto thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul : my God, I have put my trust in Thee, O let me not be confounded. Neither let mine enemies triumph over me : for all they that hope in thee shall not be ashamed . Shew me thy ways, O Lord : and teach me thy paths.*” (*Psalm 25*). Instead of being discouraged by our past failings and sinfulness to our Lord, let us be thoroughly ashamed of them...which is a much better thing. If we harbor some secret sin, then let us confess it to a priest. Let us free ourselves from *all* those things that would do damage to our souls and keep us from the full love of God. Once absolved and free, we can recite with the Psalmist; “*Remember O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses, for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions : according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake O Lord... Turn thee unto me; for I am desolate and afflicted.*” (*Psalm 25, Vss 6 -7 & 16*).

Now, with confidence, let us beg of Him his constant help, that we may prepare well during this Advent for His coming. We can think again upon the words of Psalm 25: “*Shew me thy ways, O Lord ; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me : for thou art the God of my salvation ; on thee I wait all the day.*” (*Psalm 25; Vss. 4-5*). We ask this not only for ourselves in our

preparation, but also for all our families, friends, strangers...in short, the whole world.

We can easily see in this meditation how Psalm 25 has offered us many thoughts and inspirations. Little wonder that the Church in its' age old wisdom placed this psalm as the entrance psalm (Introit) for this First Sunday in Advent. Let us conclude with confident hearts, by the memorization and the frequent repetition of the ancient prayer so well known by both Eastern and Western monastics, “ The Jesus Prayer” :

“ Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner.”

A more fitting prayer for the Advent Season which we can carry on throughout all the year we could not find, and commit to memory and constant use.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY:

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness.



Advent : In a Nutshell

The season of Advent is a four-week period of spiritual preparation by Christians before Christmas. St. Andrew's Day falls on November 30th, and Advent Sunday is the one nearest, before or after, that day, introducing the Advent season. The First Sunday in Advent marks the beginning of the Liturgical (or Church) year as opposed to the civil year which begins on January 1st.

In post-Roman and Medieval times, autumn in Northern Europe had been a time of feasting because the harvest and the slaughtering of those animals which it would not be possible to feed over

the winter. It would be a last chance to enjoy such abundance before the hardships of the winter months set in. In those times, winter claimed many people through sickness, starvation, and its rigorous weather, and was accepted as a very dark season. Survival, not recreation was the guiding concept for living in winter in those times.

Tradition carries the origin of the observance of Advent as far back as St. Peter. But reliable history takes us back to the fifth century, when it was referred to by St. Maximus Taurinensis (aka; Maximus of Turin, 5th century bishop who wrote homilies on the liturgical year) in a homily on the subject. The Synod of Lerida (524 A.D.), speaks of it as a Church appointment, marriages being forbidden from the beginning of Advent until Christmas. Official approbation is given by most historians to Pope Gregory the Great, who did much to reform and put to order the liturgical calendar, the liturgy itself and liturgical music of the Church.

Advent took on the observances of preparation, penance and fasting, similar to those of Lent. The Advent fast, however, was not as severe as the Lenten one, and abstinence was required only three days a week. Items to be excluded from the diet included meat, cheese, and fat as well as wine, ale, and honey-beer. The limited diet was occasionally supplemented by fish as was available. Monastics as well as lay people subsisted on bread as their penitential staple. In addition to the prohibition of weddings, the faithful were also expected to abstain from games, unnecessary travel, and amorous activity during Advent.

Some confuse the penitential nature of Advent with that of Lent and even go so far as call Advent a “mini-Lent” ... this is misleading. The penitential nature that's observed in Advent is done in the spirit of preparation and expectation. It has been traditional Catholic practice for the faithful to make their Confessions during both seasons. The idea in that making one's Advent Confession, they will not be burdened by their sins and transgressions, and can fully concentrate upon this spirit of preparation, anticipation, and the giving of self...in imitation of Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem.

The general liturgical color for Advent has been purple, but this has been a developing uniformity that has occurred over the last four or five centuries. In churches and monasteries in England and the Continent, the colors for Advent varied from purple, to a deep blue (indigo) to even black were found in use during the Middle Ages. It is in keeping with our Medieval English monastic charism, that the chapel at Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory uses the deep Blue as its liturgical color for Advent..

- Excerpted from *The Chipmunk's Nutshell Library*, by Br. A. Chip Monk, OSB

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”
- St. John, Ch. 10, Vs. 10

“ Faithful soul, prepare thy heart for this Bride-groom, that He may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and to dwell within thee”. --- Thomas a Kempis

**Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory
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**PLEASE NOTE: PUBLIC SUNDAY MASSES WILL RESUME IN THE SPRING.
CONVENTUAL MASSES ONLY FOR THE WINTER.**

KALENDAR

Holy days and Saints days for the week of December 1st to December 8th, A.D. 2013 as observed at the Priory.

- Sunday, December 1st ... **The First Sunday In Advent** ...*Bl. Richard Whiting, OSB Ab. & Myr. 16th cent. (1)*
 - Monday, December 2nd ...*Comm. Bl. Robert, O.Cist. Abbot, (Perseverance by Holiness), 12th cent. Spain.*
 - Tuesday, December 3rd**St. Francis Xavier, C. 16th cent.** ... *St. Galganus, OSB hermit, 12th cent. (Austerity)*
 - Wednesday, December 4th ..**St. Osmund, B (2)**.....*comm. St. Clement of Alexandria, C & D. 3rd cent.*
 - Thursday, December 5th*feria in Advent.Trans. & .comm. St. Barbara, V. & Myr. 3rd cent.*
 - Friday, December 6th**St. Nicholas, B. & C.** 4th cent. (*Charity to the poor & children*).
 - Saturday, December 7th **St. Ambrose, B.C.D.** 4th cent. (*Defender of the Faith*).
 - Sunday, December 8th**The Conception of the B.V.M. (3)** ...*comm Second Sunday in Advent.*
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KEY: *Ab. = Abbot, Ap. = Apostle, Bp. = Bishop, C. or Conf. = Confessor, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, M. = Monk, Myr. = Martyr, P= Priest Vir. = Virgin,*

- Notes:**
1. *Last Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey. Executed on false charges of treason by the English Crown in 1539.*
 2. *Bp. Of Salisbury, credited with compilation of Domesday Book & Use of Sarum. Norman/English 11th Cent.*
 3. *Also called; The Feast of the Immaculate Conception (of the Blessed Virgin Mary).*

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MISCELLANIA:

SUBSCRIPTIONS; If you know of anyone who would like to be on our e-mailing list to receive this weekly offering, please either feel free to copy and pass this along to them, or have them send us their e-mail address and we will gladly add it to our mailing list.

CANDLE OFFERING: Our supply of altar candles is nearly exhausted. We would gratefully welcome all offerings to help us replenish our supply in time for Candlemas (Feb. 2nd) ...the traditional date for the blessing of candles to be used in the new year. Please send your donations to our address: Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Priory, 4 Shaw Road, Raymond, Maine 04071 , marked "Candle Offering". If you would like to make your offering as a memorial, please include the name(s) of those you want remembered. God Bless you for your generosity!



VENI ADVENTUM !

COME, ADVENT !