

December 8th A.D. 2013
The Second Sunday in Advent

Meditation

Epistle and Gospel Readings for this Sunday

The Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Romans: Chap. 15, Vss. 4 – 13

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke: Chap. 21, Vss. 25 - 33

(1928 Book of Common Prayer, Pages 92 - 93)
(People's Anglican Missal, Pages A4 – A 6)



Christ describes the Last Judgment. There will be signs above the world, on the earth, and fear in the hearts of men as the Savior returns in glory.

Lift up our Souls

We might be wondering why the subject of the second coming of our Lord and the great Judgment at the end of the world is presented as the Gospel reading on this Second Sunday in Advent. Aren't we supposed to be preparing for our Lord's coming at Christmas? Is there a closer relationship between these two comings than we might think? Let's look and see.

Jesus' description of the Last Judgment is certainly vivid enough. The signs in the sun, moon, and the stars will produce fear in mens' hearts. Christ says that men will faint for fear and for the expectation of the things that are coming into the world. And then Our Lord appears! Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, He will come on a cloud with great power and majesty. Jesus, the little Child of Bethlehem whose birth we so desire now, He will come as Lord and Judge. On this Second Sunday of the year, He wants us to see that second coming in majesty as the glorious culmination of His and *our* whole lives. His coming at Christmas calls for and points to His coming in glory.

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We really don't know if we shall be on earth on that last day. Many conjecture and make their own prophecies that we are living in the so-called: "end times", but do we really know this for certain? What we *do* know, is that there *is* going to be a meeting between each of us and our Lord, some day, and we should want no irrational and slavish fear spoiling our love for Christ when that meeting comes. There is only one thing that should make us hope that our meeting with Christ will be a happy one...and that hope should be in our *love* for Him.

This is Advent. It is the time of *hope, expectation, and desire*. Jesus Christ and His church begin this new year by having us pray: "*Unto thee, O Lord, will I lift up my soul : my God I have put my trust in Thee.*" (*Psalm 25 ... there it is again!*).

Jesus has loved us. Jesus has called us. Jesus has filled our bottomless hearts with a longing and desire for Him. This is all *His* doing ... this deep yearning for Him, and we can't help ourselves. We wouldn't want it any other way. We know enough about life to realize that if we try to satisfy our desires for anything but Christ, we shall be disappointed and frustrated. How often have we played the game and have tried to satisfy our many desires and have always come to the same conclusion? Human love is good; it is a sharing in the love that that Jesus and His Heavenly Father have for one another. But unless we make human love a part of our love for Christ, it can destroy us and all love that we may have.

It is senseless for us to set our hearts on anything like riches, power, position, food, drink, ...or any other man-made attractions. Experience has shown us so very often that these material things, far from filling the deep spiritual emptiness of our insatiable hearts, only make the hunger and desire within us more acute, and open us to the many possibilities of sin.

Veni, Jesu ... Come, Jesus

To You, Lord Jesus, we lift up our souls. Show us Your ways. Teach us Your paths in this new year. Show us Your mercy and teach us Your salvation. We must seek You during this year. We must desire You. Time is of the essence. Though we may live to be a hundred years old...we still do not have time enough...for You may call any of us tomorrow. We don't know Your Father's will, but both He and You, dear Jesus, want our love *now*.

St. Benedict tells us that *to seek You* is the principal vocation and work of a monk. We should believe that it is also the call of every Christian to do likewise. Our wanting You, Jesus, is already a sign and pledge of the fulfillment and completion that You will grant. "*All they that wait on Thee, shall not be confounded, O Lord.*" (*Psalm 25*).

Maranatha ! Come, Lord Jesus! Come now during this holy season of Advent and purify our souls and minds of the works of darkness that have taken root within us. The pride, the bitterness, the impatience, the egotism, and all the forms of self-indulgence that our frail human natures are subject to. Come now, and come at Christmas. Come and destroy the fear of living and the fear of dying that haunts our lives, so on that day of our mutual meeting, we may lift up our heads, and really know that our salvation is indeed at hand. *Come, Lord Jesus!*

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Be of good cheer ... Your redemption is at hand.

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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

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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

A Prayer for the Week

Be present, O Merciful God, and protect us...so that we who are fatigued by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon Thy eternal changlessness.

“ *All things are passing! ... God never changeth!* “ - St. Theresa of Avila

From the Holy Rule of St. Benedict

Chapter 7 : On Humility (*continued*)

“ The eleventh degree of humility is that when a monk speaks he do so gently and without laughter, humbly and seriously, in a few sensible words, and that he be not noisy in his speech. It is written: “ A wise man is known by the fewness of his words.”

“ *Gentleness proceeds equally from the source of sweetness and of peace. So Solomon says: “ A sweet word multiplies friends and appeases enemies, and a gracious tongue will abound in a good man (Sir. Ch.6, Vs. 5).”* And he says again: “ *Well-ordered words are as like a honeycomb.*” (*Proverbs: Ch. 16, Vs. 24*). *Well-ordered words lend honor to the one who utters them, and minister grace to the hearers. (St. Benedict) added; “Without laughter”. Words that are full of laughter show clearly that a monk is either foolish and light-minded, or at any rate an empty fellow. For a monk must speak humbly and seriously, because it is written: “ Do not be hasty with your tongue” and: “He that hates gossip extinguishes malice.” (Sir. Ch 19, Vs. 5). And; that in a few sensible words... “ Few; because it is written: “ In much speaking you shall not avoid sin.” (Proverbs, Ch 10 Vs. 19). And; “ He who uses many words shall harm his own soul.” (Sir. Ch 20, Vs. 8). Sensible; because it is written; “ A wise man will hold his peace, until the proper time, but the wanton and the fool will not observe the proper time.” (Sir. Ch 20, Vs. 7). And; “ One who is thoughtless in speaking shall experience evils.” (Proverbs Ch. 13, Vs. 3). And that he be not noisy in his speech. *The monk as one who imitates Christ must be silent and not noisy. For it is written of the Lord: “He shall not cry out, nor shall his voice be heard abroad.” (Is. Ch. 42, Vs. 2). Silence befits a monk more than does shouting. Therefore a subdued voice shows a noble character, and a loud voice indicated levity. A loud voice often makes a man hateful, but a subdued voice makes him lovable. Hence, it is written: “ A wise man makes himself lovable by his words.” (Sir. Ch. 20, Vs. 13). Lovable, because he prudently speaks sensible and lovable words. A wise man is known by the fewness of his words. His is known, that is, he makes known to everyone else exteriorly what manner of man he is in himself interiorly. By speaking, he shows others the wisdom he was keeping secretly in his heart. And he who was lurking in hiding is known only to himself, by speaking he shows himself in public. In other words, he, by speaking shows publicly shows himself exteriorly to others as the kind of person he is interiorly by holding his peace.”* Excerpt from: **Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict** by Smaragdus of St. Mihiel. Translated by David Barry, OSB Cistercian Study Series Number 212, Cistercian Publications, 2007*

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**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 8th to December 15th, A.D. 2013 as observed at the Priory.

Sunday, December 8th ... **The Conception of the B.V.M. (1)** ... *comm. Second Sunday in Advent.*
Monday, December 9th *in Octave of Conception of B.V.M.*
Tuesday, December 10th *in Octave.comm. St. Herbert, Cist. Monk & Bp. (exemplary holy living).12th cent.*
Wednesday, December 11th ..*in Octave.....comm. St. Damasius I, Po. & C. 5th cent.*
Thursday, December 12th ...*in Octave.*
Friday, December 13th*in Octave..... comm. St. Elisabeth, O.S.B. (2) (consecrated solitary) 13th cent.*
Saturday, December 14th ..*St. Lucy, V. & M. 4th cent.....Sun in Capricorn, Winter Solstice (Sarum kalendar).*
Sunday, December 15th**Third Sunday in Advent (Gaudete Sunday)**..... *Octave Day Con. Of B.V.M.*

KEY: *Ab. = Abbot, Ap. = Apostle, Bp. = Bishop, C. or Conf. = Confessor, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, M. = Monk, Myr. = Martyr, P= Priest Po. = Pope, Vir. = Virgin,*

- Notes:** 1. *Also called; The Feast of the Immaculate Conception (of the Blessed Virgin Mary).*
2. *Surnamed Rose, abbess of Rosoy, France. Became a solitary, noted for her holiness.*
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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 monetary 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!



Ave MARIA, GRATIA PLENA.

HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE.