

# 1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

St. Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

We should appreciate that not only is Christ in our midst but that, because of our Baptism, He is in each one of us. If we understand that Advent is about preparing for the coming of Our Lord then we should recognise that we need to help others prepare themselves to see Christ.

Even though Christmas is regarded by the world as a time of materialism, of what am I going to get, and which shops have manipulated into a boom time for sales for themselves, we need to see that Advent is a time of constraining ourselves; restraining ourselves with spending our money on the accumulation of material goods so that instead we can spend ourselves in the accumulation of spiritual goods. Our world has taught us to cloud our minds with what we can see, of what we can have, of what we own, but we need to pray so that our minds are no longer clouded and so that we can see ourselves—for the good and the bad—more clearly allowing the light of Christ to illuminate our souls. We have to look at ourself and measure ourself not by the standards of this world which says the more stuff I own then the more power I have and so the better I am, but by the standards of Christ so that we place our life against His life and ask how I measure up.

In Advent we turn our minds and our souls more fully to the birth of Our Lord: the only man born so that He may die. Because this what we need to remember; that Our Lord was born so that by God becoming Man and taking on all the sins of men, would, by His Passion, Death and Resurrection, free us from our own death. Can any of us truly understand what the Blessed Virgin Mary went through in being the Mother of God, but of God who would be born a child for her so that He would die for her and for all. We think of the horror of

Abraham being asked by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac; of Abraham laying his son on a pile of wood with the knife poised to kill him until God sent an angel to spare him (see *Gen. 22:1-12*). But do we think of the horror of God Himself sending His own Son to die for us? And not just for the sins of men and women thousands of years ago, but for the sins of men and women today—for your very own sins.

In Advent we should meditate ever more upon the Holy Family, remembering that God became a new born child, that God entrusted Himself to be taken care of by Mary and Joseph, who made a home for Him. That meditation should hopefully remind us that we, too, are to make a home for God in our very own souls. No more should we only ever think of what God can or should do for me, but we should think of what I can and should do for God. We worry so much about my rights, but what about the rights of God?

As we go through these weeks of Advent and as we think of what gifts we will want to give to those whom we love, maybe spend some time also thinking of what can you give to He who became Man for us, who lived for us, who died for us. After all, it is only because of Him that we have Christmas to begin with.

Advent is not a season to be forgotten but a season that should fill us with joy in anticipation for what is to come. But Advent must be more than just this one month, it must become a season that fills our lives month after month. Why? Because on the one hand Advent grants to us the time to prepare ourselves for the birth of Our Lord, but on the other hand it grants to us the reminder that we must spend our time preparing for our death, when we will see Him, but who will be not in a manger but on a throne of judgment. And if we do that, and if we do that well with full knowledge and understanding of the commands of God given to us through His Church, and if we have spent ourselves seeking Him above all others, then the Advent of our lives will also be spent in joyful anticipation of the coming again of Our Lord when we, by His

grace and mercy, will, just as the Three Kings laid the most precious gifts before Him, we will be able to lay our lives before Him as our very own precious gift.