



COME, LORD JESUS!

Reflections for
the Season of
Advent

In His Own Words ...
POPE FRANCIS



Jesus teaches us another way: Go out. Go out and share your testimony, go out and interact with your brothers and sisters, go out and share, go out and ask. Become the Word in body as well as spirit.

— Pope Francis

Prepare the Way for the Lord

Matthew 24:37-44

Today's Gospel urges us to pay attention, to be present both to the ways in which God is coming into our life as well as the ways we come to God. Jesus reminds us that our actions (or lack thereof) have eternal consequences.

1 STAY AWAKE THAT YOU MAY BE PREPARED. Jesus is adamant that his followers are to pay attention to God's presence in our lives. Our daily life presents opportunities to respond to the divine invitation to be in relationship with God. Very often that invitation comes through people and events. Our preparation is our response to God's invitation.

What/who claims attention in my life? How can I respond to God's invitation this Advent season?



2 THE LORD WILL COME. Jesus repeats with conviction "the Son of Man will come." We, like the early Christians, confess in the Creed, "he will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." We hear these words again after the Lord's Prayer, "as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ."

What difference does it make in my life that the Lord will come again?

3 YOU DO NOT KNOW THE HOUR. Perhaps our biggest challenge in life is to accept our not knowing and our limitations while still living lives filled with joyful expectation.

What is one way I can live more joyfully this Advent season?

ADVENT PRAYER

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light! (Isaiah 9:1)

God of compassion,
be with us in these long and dark days
as we await the birth of your son, Jesus.
Amen.





LIVING THE LITURGICAL YEAR KEEPING TIME

Most of us have at least one calendar on which to keep track of our commitments. In the life of the Church, we keep time by the Scripture readings we hear proclaimed in the liturgy on Sundays. This cycle of readings is called the **Liturgical Year**.

Advent begins the liturgical year, with the four Sundays before Christmas. It is a time of joyful expectation, of waiting. But what are we waiting for?

The prophet Isaiah tells of the hope of the Israelites who waited for the coming



(advent) of the Messiah. He dreams of a time when God's rule will prevail. We believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and we celebrate his coming as a babe in Bethlehem. We also await the fulfillment of the divine plan which will be

Christ's Second Coming at the end times. During Advent we both look back (birth of Jesus) and look forward (the Second Coming) while paying attention to the grace of the present.

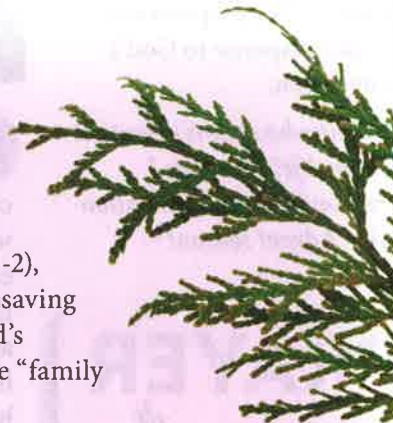
How can I be truly present this Advent at home, at work, and at play?

"Though already present in the Church, Christ's reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled 'with power and great glory' by the king's return to earth." (CCC, 671)



Some of our Advent practices, like the Advent calendar or the Advent wreath, help us keep time. Others, like the Jesse Tree (see Is 11:1-2), help us remember God's saving presence in the life of God's people as represented by the "family tree" of Jesus.

Here's a new twist on an old favorite: as you prepare the ornaments for the Jesse Tree, tie in your own genealogy. Tell the stories of God acting in your own extended family. If you have pictures of ancestors, make simple ornaments by pasting a copy of those pictures on different paper cutouts and adding them to the traditional ornaments on the tree. The tree becomes a visual reminder of Emmanuel (God-with-us). To learn more about the Jesse Tree, visit www.osvparish.com.



SAINTS of the SEASON

Saint Nicholas
Feast day: December 6



Nicholas (280-343) came from a wealthy family, with parents who always were generous to the poor. When they died, Nicholas gave their money away to help people in need. He became a priest and was soon made a bishop. He was known for caring for children in trouble, healing the sick, and feeding the hungry. He often performed secret acts of kindness. After he died, stories of his goodness spread to many countries. He became known as Nicholas the Wonderworker. Saint Nicholas Day is celebrated each year on December 6. Tradition holds that kids who leave their shoes by the door before they go to sleep on December 5 will wake up with their shoes filled with candy and small treats — Saint Nicholas has been there!

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