

## Commentary on the Readings for December 3, 2017

### The First Sunday in Advent

Today, we begin the season of Advent and the theme of the Readings comes from the last sentence of the Gospel: "What I say to you, I say to all, watch." What Jesus is saying here in Mark's gospel is "Be on guard for the Lord is coming and you know not the day or hour." For those who have a good and faithful relationship with Our Lord, this should be an occasion to look forward to; but for those who do not know Christ, it could be a frustrating time of decision.

In the **First Reading** from the Prophet **Isaiah (63:16-19; 64:2-7)**, we hear the prophet lamenting a prayer of frustration directed to God. The time of this writing is the early 5th Century BC. The prophet, who had been sent by God to bolster the spirits of the people of Israel and Judah, has not had much success. The people were disorganized and without leadership. Instead of turning to God for help, they quarreled among themselves and sinned greatly. In spite of all this, the prophet lays his life on the line and pleads for God's mercy and help for himself and his people.

The Responsorial **Psalm (80:2-19)** is a beautiful prayer that continues the same theme of calling upon God to come and lead us to salvation. This prayer is, of course, fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ at the first Christmas. However, He didn't come as a "knight in shining armor" but rather, as a tiny babe born in a stable. He died the same way, "the poorest of the poor," so that we could identify with His humble lifestyle to see the degree of love that this God-Man has for you and me.

The **Second Reading** is from St. Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians (1:3-9)*. Here, Paul is giving thanks for the blessings that God has given His people through Jesus Christ. This is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prayer. Christ did come to save His people. Not as they had expected, but in His own time and on His own terms. We should be thankful for these and all of God's blessings. This is why we celebrate at least one Day of Thanksgiving. It should be every day!

The **Gospel Reading** is from *Mark (13:33-37)*. In these few words, we have a powerful statement from Jesus Christ Himself. It is directed to everyone, but not everyone need be worried. Those who are walking in the footsteps of Christ will be ready and alert when He comes for them; but those who have lagged behind, this meeting could be a time of great despair.

As we begin a new Liturgical Year and the beautiful season of Advent in preparation for Christmas, we have a timely opportunity to take inventory of our spiritual assets and review how we are using our time, talents and treasures. Or, we just might need to spend more time in prayer asking God to help us reevaluate our relationship with Him. Whatever the decision, it is better than being frustrated by doing nothing. So, have you taken a spiritual inventory lately? Just something to think about during your Prayer Time this week!

**MFB**