

First Sunday of Advent

December 2, 2007

Isaiah 2: 1 - 5; Romans 13: 11 - 14; Matthew 24: 27 - 44

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It is with much energy that the Church ushers us into the Advent season: “let us climb the mountain,” “wake from sleep,” “stay awake.” There is no mistaking the Church’s call that this Advent must not find us settling into a quiet routine, waiting for our remembrance of Christ’s birth on Christmas.

Our lived experience reminds that we have often spend our Advents caught up in much busyness: addressing Christmas cards, baking cookies, decorating trees and mantles, and buying gift upon gift. While our attitude in all of these comings and goings can help us see the deeper values of friendship and generosity, the reality is that the energy expended often leads only to exhaustion and short tempers.

The Church this morning, however, is asking us to use our energy to plumb deeper values. We are to walk in the light of the Lord and put on the Lord Jesus Christ while recognizing that the Lord Jesus will come when he is least expected. This is not a matter of keeping a close eye on the calendar as we mark off the days until Christmas. This coming of Christ is more than expected. A quick check on the Internet can tell us what day Christmas will fall on for years to come.

The unexpected coming of this same Lord comes in the twists and turns of our daily life: the child in need of comfort, the phone call from a friend that pulls us from our tasks, the salesperson in training as we are hoping to make a quick purchase, the homeless man looking for a few cents and a kind smile to survive another day. The list is limited only by the number of people we can encounter in any given day.

But it is our response to these unexpected events and the usual tasks of preparing for Christmas that not only allows us to recognize Christ in our lives and become that Christ for others, but that also helps make ready the way of the Lord. The prophets of old prepared for Jesus’ first coming; we must be the prophets who make possible his Second Coming.

As we stand at the threshold of Advent, let us ask what we can do these coming days to make Christ present today and in the time to come.