

First Sunday of Advent

November 27, 2005

Is 63:16b-17, 19; 64:2-7; I Cor 1:3-9; Mk 13:33-37

Preaching: *Sister Rose Marie Hennessy*

Have you ever watched people waiting? Waiting for their turn at Safeway, for BART, for the turn signal to change, to be waited on at a bakery, for the Communion line to speed up? Occasionally this waiting is far more significant: the call from the doctor regarding the results of a biopsy; the letter of acceptance or rejection at a university or for a new position; the vigil at the bedside of a loved one. Everyone's reaction to waiting is different and unique. For some the waiting seems reflective; for others it seems annoying; and there are points in our lives when the waiting becomes fearful while we strain to cling to hope. When we hear the word *advent* our bodies resound "*waiting*".

The liturgical year beginning today is filled with affects rising up and spilling over from years of storing memories. The liturgical life invites us to prayer with the hues of blue, purple, and lavender; with music through the majestic rendition of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* from Handel's Messiah; with the smells of freshly cut greens and the experience of darkness brightened through the light of newly burning candles. While we know *advent* invites us to "wait" it does so in ways that touch all aspects of our daily living, especially our living together in community. We wait with Mary whose two significant Feasts of Immaculate Conception and Guadalupe punctuate the season and call us to recognize the role she plays in all seasons of the Church and of Christian women and men.

Sacred Scripture today does not let us "rest" in affects or in memories. The WORD will not let us "rest" in the beauty of color, music, and smell. Isaiah speaks the WORD of truth: "would that you would meet us doing right—that we were mindful of you in our ways". Mark calls out: "Be watchful! Be alert!"

We can be so caught up in preparations not just for Christmas but also for Advent that we are not watchful, not alert to our surroundings, to our sisters, to our neighbors, to our world, to our promises to live out the call of Baptism. I pray that in this period of hopefilled *waiting* I do not miss the *present* experience that can bring hope to others NOW.