

1st Sunday of Advent - A
Isaiah 2:1-6;
Romans 13:11-14;
Matthew 24:37-44
Little Flower - 11/27/22

My Brothers and Sisters,

Beginning today, the Archdiocese is allowing parishes to reintroduce Communion under both Species. We did a short survey a few weeks ago to try to understand how all of you feel about this. Less than half of the respondents are ready to receive from the cup at this time. Another 20% of respondents will feel more comfortable after the current flu season. We also have to consider our current number of Eucharistic Ministers. We will need an extra 12 ministers each weekend to efficiently reintroduce the shared cup during Communion.

The Liturgy Committee met and seriously considered all the factors in order to come to a decision. We need time to recruit and train new Eucharistic ministers. Our current thinking is that the first of February would be the earliest we will be able to recruit, train, and schedule an adequate number of ministers, especially in light of the upcoming holiday season. Of course, this will be dependent on getting enough volunteers. You will soon be asked to consider helping in this ministry.

The Catholic Church teaches that “when we receive Holy Communion under the form of the consecrated Host, we receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.” In other words, we receive the living Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ.

Thank you for your understanding. I hope many of you will consider becoming a Eucharistic Minister when we appeal to you in a few weeks.

Today we celebrate the First Sunday of Advent. Today marks the beginning of a new Church year. During the first part of Advent, we prepare for Christ’s coming in glory at the end of time. During the second part of Advent, we prepare to celebrate Christ’s historical coming at Christmas. Throughout Advent, we prepare to welcome Christ anew into our minds and hearts today.

The readings today focus on Christ’s final coming in glory. In today’s first reading, Isaiah makes it clear there will be peace and harmony among all peoples: *“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another....”*

Today’s second reading and today’s Gospel call us to have a sense of urgency in preparing for Christ’s coming. To the Romans, Paul wrote, *“It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.”* He calls us to throw off works of darkness and put on the armor of light, in other words, to live in the light by living lives worthy of Christ. In today’s Gospel, Jesus warns us always to be prepared for the coming of the Lord *“for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”* Although his final coming in glory may not be imminent, we never know when Christ will return for us individually.

Since last week, I have been thinking about what we might do to make Advent and Christmas more meaningful. First, there are many aids to assist us in preparing for Christ’s coming. The *Little Blue Books* of Advent reflections are at the doors of the Church. Dynamic Catholic is offering Best Advent Ever 2.0. Thursday evening will be our Advent Penance Service, which will include Our Lady of Lourdes parishioners and our students making First Reconciliation. Six priests, at least one of whom speaks Spanish, will be available.

My brothers and sisters, today, however, I would like to suggest something else. If we want to welcome Christ anew into our lives and hearts, I would suggest that we spend this Advent trying to become more aware of Christ’s presence already among us, his presence in others, ourselves, in the events of our lives and the lives of others, in the Eucharist and the other sacraments, in God’s Word, and in our world.

Also, I would encourage all of us to be healers, peacemakers, and reconcilers. During Advent, I am suggesting we look at the divisions and disharmony in our own lives. We have too many conflicts and divisions within our families, among our friends, and with those with whom we work. We need to look for ways to end those divisions and conflicts, to build bridges, and to resolve disagreements and conflicts constructively. I would also suggest we strive to find more inner peace in our lives in Christ, the Prince of Peace.