

Sunday Message

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year C • 1 December 2024 • Psalter Week 1

THE TRUTH OF THIS SEASON

LUKE 21:25-28,34-36



Events in the world can alert us to the activity of God - or they can prove a huge distraction.

Jesus speaks of signs that the kingdom is near at hand, the kingdom that will bring liberation to all those who are captives. He stresses the importance of being alert, attentive to the signs that the kingdom is near. We can't be sure when all the events foretold will take place, so attentiveness must be second nature. Whatever happens, whenever it happens, the disciple must be prepared.

For Jesus, being attentive is not simply waiting idly for something to happen. Attentiveness is opportunity for prayer and preparation. The disciple knows that the glory of the Lord is just around the corner and lives in expectation, knowing that the present order will pass and the new order will take its place. When all that is to come to pass comes to pass, the attentive disciple will not be taken by surprise. ■

REFLECT

It popped up on Facebook a few weeks before the 2016 US presidential election. A sensational story on its news feed claimed that Pope Francis had endorsed Donald Trump for president. To the casual user scrolling through Facebook, the story looked legitimate. But keen observers of the campaign as well as clued-in Catholics knew it had to be wrong. Popes don't publicly interfere in elections. Popes don't endorse specific candidates. It would have been a huge break with tradition, something Pope Francis simply would not do.

And yet there it was on Facebook. The way the story was written and presented made it look real. It could have been posted by a reporter for The New York Times or Associated Press. But it hadn't come from any of the mainstream media. It was an invented story, made up to influence the outcome of the election. It was part of an orchestrated campaign to encourage Catholics in swing states to vote in a certain way. It was part of what came to be known as fake news.

It did its job. The story about Pope Francis stood out because it was so blatantly false, yet even if one person in a thousand in a few key states changed their vote because of it, that would have been enough to sway the result.

Fake news is deliberate disinformation designed to deceive. It is lies and distortion of the kind used by Hitler and Goebbels, a strategy straight out of George Orwell's *1984*.

After the election, Facebook and Twitter (X) admitted their platforms had been used to spread false news not only during the presidential campaign but also during the Brexit referendum and other election campaigns too. Social media had been systematically corrupted by lies and misinformation. The result was that people ended up not sure as to what was fact and what was fiction.

"What is truth?" Pilate asked during the trial of Jesus. It's a question that has even

greater urgency in today's multi-media world. It is a question worth reflecting upon especially during Advent. Advent is the season of watchful waiting for the Lord's coming, the season of being attentive to God's presence. We are not to be misled by false gods or false promises. We are not to be misled by a misplaced emphasis on material things or on 'Black Friday' or the commercialisation of Christmas. We are not to lose sight of the truth of this season - that the God who came among us to save us is with us now and will come again at the end of time to bring us to the fullness of life. We must be alert.

The truth of this season is that God is one with us and will never abandon us. Even when Church and State let us down, even when we're not sure what to believe any more, we can be certain of God's love and presence with us at all times. The Good News we celebrate during Advent is not fake news. It is the truth in the news, the truth that sets us free. ■

DO

Put up an Advent wreath. Light a candle today and each Sunday of Advent, as you await the coming of the Lord.

SAY

Say the opening lines of the psalm each day this week: "Lord, make me know your ways. Lord, teach me your paths."

LEARN

Advent is the great season of waiting.

The spiritual life is the way to everlasting happiness.

God wants the best for us.

PRAY

Pray for those for whom this time of year is especially difficult. Ask the Lord to comfort them.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.*

COLLECT

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Jeremiah 33:14-16

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel
and the house of Judah.
In those days and at that time
I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David,
and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely.
And this is the name by which it will be called:
'The LORD is our righteousness.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 25(24):4-5b. 8-9. 10. 14. R. 1b

R: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

- O LORD, make me know your ways.
Teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth, and teach me;
for you are the God of my salvation. **R.**
- Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he shows the way to sinners.
He guides the humble in right judgement;
to the humble he teaches his way. **R.**
- All the LORD's paths are mercy and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and commands.
The LORD's secret is for those who fear him;
to them he reveals his covenant. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians.

Brothers and sisters: May the Lord make you increase and abound
in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may
establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and
Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints

Finally, then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the
Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk
and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more
and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through
the Lord Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Psalm 85(84):8

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Luke 21:25-28. 34-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in
sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations
in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves,
people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming
on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And
then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power
and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place,
straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is
drawing near.

'But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with
dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day
come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who
dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times,
praying that you may have strength to escape all these things
that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,
gathered from among your gifts to us,
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below,
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*The Lord will bestow his bounty,
and our earth shall yield its increase.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



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