

## **First Sunday of Advent - Lectionary: 3**

### **Reading I - [Jer 33:14-16](#)**

The days are coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall do what is right and just in the land. In those days Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: "The LORD our justice."

**Responsorial Psalm - [Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14](#) R. (1b) *To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.***

### **Reading II - [1 Thes 3:12—4:2](#)**

Brothers and sisters: May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. Amen. Finally, brothers and sisters, we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us how you should conduct yourselves to please God and as you are conducting yourselves you do so even more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

### **Gospel - [Lk 21:25-28, 34-36](#)**

Jesus said to his disciples: "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon 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. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand. "Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap. For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth. Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength to escape the tribulations that are imminent and to stand before the Son of Man."

Today is the First Sunday in Advent, the liturgical season that focuses our celebrations on the coming of Christ; at Christmas, in our hearts, and at the end of time. The First Reading from the prophet Jeremiah refers prophetically to the coming of Jesus incarnate, Messiah King and Savior. The Second Reading speaks to the fruits, evidence, and responsibilities of having welcomed Jesus into our lives. The Gospel speaks in ominous terms of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of time.

They are readings that urge us to face life with eyes wide open, minds focused on truth, hearts beating in unison with God – full of supernatural hope. This season reminds us of the closeness of God and the power available to us through Christ, to live lives of extraordinary and transformative love. It reminds us of how we can live with our natural fears and anxiety, without falling into the sins of despair or presumption. It reminds us that our lives can be made of choices and decisions informed by Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love – instead of by fears and anxiety. It speaks to us of our freedom to make use of the things of creation to build the Kingdom of God and to become ready in holiness, at any moment to be completely united in God eternally.

We are by the design of God, pilgrims on a journey. We do not know how much time we have for the journey. For some it may be very long (90 plus years). For others it may be much shorter (30, 20, 10 years or even only a few months or weeks). However, the length of the journey is not the most important aspect of our lives here, but rather, how we live and who we become during the journey. We must know our origins and identity, becoming increasingly certain of our destination and clear in mind and spirit as to how we'll get there. Meaning, purpose, certainty and clarity, or the lack thereof will influence all we do, they will guide our choices. If I decide with God that I want to be an engineer or an architect, then I make choices and decisions about how to accomplish that goal. If, on the other hand, I decide that I am to be a monk or a missionary, then I will have to make quite different decisions for a very different journey.

Sadly, for many, there is no sense of being pilgrims, that the gift of life is to be lived as a pilgrimage. For all people and especially Christians, the journey isn't just an unavoidable means to get to our destination, to reach a goal, it has value in itself. To fully experience each and every moment, we must approach our life journey as pilgrims, not just seeking the perfect insta-moment. We must not be blind to the beauty that surrounds us, but rather see and admire the morning sky or the majesty of the trees, the sounds and songs of little critters, or the human ingenuity of the buildings we pass on our way. We were made to discover meaning and celebrate creation with a pilgrim's heart on the paths we take and avoid becoming so desensitized to and disinterested in the wonder of our existence that we reduce our lives to goal accomplishment and the perfect selfie to mark the moment. Our nature desires that we be keenly aware of what is going on around us and within us; aware of our surroundings and ourselves as sacred and other people as gift. The journey and the destination are part of one reality. The going is as important as the arriving, and one contributes to the richness of the other. *"Pilgrims, immerse themselves fully in the places they encounter, listen to the message they communicate and make them a part of their quest for happiness and fulfillment."* Pope Francis

As a pilgrim member of the mystical body of Christ, the Church, the pilgrims' journey must include the internal spiritual self. In fact, it is the most important part of our focused awareness, alertness. If we want to celebrate the first coming of Jesus and prepare for his second, then the way to do it is to be aware of his coming into every moment of every day. *"First, with a disposition of thanksgiving, and with hearts open to praise God for everything, especially the gift of life. Then, we must cultivate the natural desire of seeking, the expression of our heart's unquenchable thirst to encounter the Lord. Finally, penance, which helps us to look within, to acknowledge the wrong paths and decisions we have at times taken and, in this way, to be converted to the Lord and to the light of his Gospel. Knowing that one is loved and forgiven by God makes it possible to embrace others and help them sense the welcome and love of God."* Pope Francis

It can, at times, be challenging to look to the future with hope, especially if we are experiencing dramatic life circumstances and situations that can stir within us feelings of discouragement or despair and prevent us from believing it will pass. The keen awareness with which we are to live our lives can itself make all-to-present and daunting the tragedy of war, social injustices, inequalities, hunger and the exploitation of human beings and the natural environment. As well, so many young people without natural or supernatural hope, as prisoners of boredom or destructive behaviors. The key to overcoming the challenges, say all the saints of our communion, is to affirm our trust in the Lord and keep turning to God no matter how rocky the path becomes. Never fail to receive the energy and nourishment to keep going that are provided by Jesus in the Eucharist. As in the example of [Blessed Carlo Acutis](#), who made the Eucharist his most important daily appointment! "All Catholics should do the same", Pope Francis said, *"In this way, in union with the Lord, we can walk without tiring, for he is walking alongside us. I encourage all of you to discover anew the great gift of the Eucharist!"*

Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross: *"For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life."* [Rom 5:19](#) That life becomes manifest in our own life of faith, which begins with Baptism, develops in openness to God's grace and is enlivened by a supernatural hope constantly renewed and confirmed by the working of the Holy Spirit. As a pilgrim, Christ himself walks alongside us and reveals to us the mysteries of the Father, so that we too can say, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, *"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."* [Luke 24:29](#)

### **[Jubilee of Hope: Begins at Christmas](#)**

This Jubilee of hope is an opportunity for all Catholics to have a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, *the 'Door' of our salvation, whom the Church is charged to proclaim always, everywhere and to all as "our hope"*. [1Tim 1:1](#) The jubilee year is meant to focus our pilgrimage, our journey of life this year on the theological virtue of Hope, and the reason for our hope. We are being called to experience the embrace of our merciful God in new and renewed ways, to experience pardon and the forgiveness of all our 'interior debts,' as in the biblical tradition of the jubilee years.

In the spirit of hope, the Apostle Paul addressed these words of encouragement to the Christian community of Rome; *"Since we are justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God... Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."* [Rom 5:1-2.5](#) The Jubilee pilgrimage is not merely an intimate, personal gesture, but is a sign of the journey of the whole people of God toward the Kingdom.

We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision. The forthcoming Jubilee can contribute greatly to restoring a climate of hope and trust as a prelude to the renewal and rebirth that we so urgently desire.

**Let us be *Pilgrims of Hope***

Letter of Pope Francis, preceding the Year of Jubilee  
[https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/content/dam/iubilaeum2025/lettera-del-papa/3.2.-LetteraDelPapa\\_Inglese.pdf](https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/content/dam/iubilaeum2025/lettera-del-papa/3.2.-LetteraDelPapa_Inglese.pdf)

Papal Bull declaring a Year of Jubilee  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509\\_spes-non-confundit\\_bolla-giubileo2025.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html)

Letter to the Youth on the occasion of World Youth Day 2024  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco\\_20240829\\_messaggio-giovani\\_2024.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20240829_messaggio-giovani_2024.html)

## **The Jubilee Prayer**

Father in heaven,  
may the *faith* you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,  
and the flame of *charity* enkindled  
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*  
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us  
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the  
Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within both  
humanity and the whole cosmos  
in the sure expectation  
of a new heaven and a new earth,  
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,  
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee  
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,  
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread  
the joy and peace of our Redeemer  
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,  
be glory and praise for ever.

**Amen**