

## November 29, 2015 – First Sunday of Advent

### *Advent = Arrival*

Today we begin Advent with a simple theme:

### **Be Ready! Expect Jesus!**

And, what is the meaning of "Advent?"

My balding head and my gray beard give a clue to my age.

So, if I say I took high school Latin 59 years ago you won't be surprised.

In freshman Latin I learned the meaning of the Latin word "ad" - it means "to" and the root word for "vent" is "come".

So, "Advent" simply means to "come to", or as we usually would say, "*arrive*".

Today's first reading speaks about that advent, that *arrival*, in prophetic terms.

Jeremiah, who wrote that first reading, is shown in the icon up on the wall, off to the left.

Jeremiah is just one of the people in those four icons who speak to the arrival, the *arrival* of the long-awaited Messiah.

Jeremiah told the people of his time, about 600 years before Christ, that God would really, really deliver on God's promises.

The Messiah would come from the line, the descendants of King David.

The Messiah would not have all the imperfections of all the kings in the line of David.

The Messiah would have integrity.

The Messiah would rule with justice.

The Messiah would save the people from their weak and evil ways.

The people waited for the *arrival* of the Messiah.

And waited.

And prayed for.

And hoped for.

And then, ... the *arrival* occurred with ... barely a whimper.

The birth pains of a virgin mother.

The sob of a tiny infant, baby Jesus, in an animal stable.

But some people did get the word.

Local shepherds came to see the Messiah.

Three Wise Men from the East came to see the Messiah.

The *Arrival* of the Lord - Christmas, over 2000 years ago.

In today's Gospel Jesus speaks to the Apostles about yet another *arrival*.

Sometime in the future there will be the end times, the apocalypse.

And at that time there is the second *arrival* of the Lord, the second coming, the Parousia.

And this *arrival* will be much different from the *arrival* of baby Jesus.

This time it will not be a whimper.

It won't simply be the birthing pains of a virgin.

It won't be the whimper of one, innocent, holy child.

Everybody, yes, everybody will get the point.

Everybody will be involved.

And it surely does not sound pleasant!

If the first coming of Jesus on Christmas was an "*Arrival*" with a capital "A" then the *arrival* at the end times is going to be an "*arrival*" with all capital letters, **ARRIVAL!**

During one of our Sunday door-to-door home visits this summer we came to a home where some people were just coming home, all dressed up.

Sure enough, they were just coming home from church.

One of them was a Jehovah Witness minister.

We had a pleasant conversation and she brought up the end times.

I mentioned that Jesus tells us (in Matt 24:26) that no one knows the day or the hour of the second coming of the Lord in the end times.

She replied, "Yes, but isn't it good to be prepared?"

That speaks to the moment, this moment, here, today.

That speaks to us about our situation, our attitudes, our plans, our directions, our way of life.

What are we to be doing here in this time between the first *Arrival* 2000 years ago and the second coming, the second **ARRIVAL?**

Consider this.

We had an *arrival* just 30 minutes ago.

We came into this building, a building containing the people of God.

God is here, now, in the people of God.

A few minutes later we had another *arrival*.

We started reading from the Sacred Scriptures.

God is present in the Word, the Word of God.

15 minutes from now we will have another *arrival*.

When the priest asks the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, the Lord will *arrive* ... again.

When we process forward up each of the aisles to receive Holy

Communion the Lord will *arrive* for each of us in a remarkably personal way.

And, *arrivals* of the Lord are not limited to these four walls.

Each time we see or meet or talk with another person, the Lord is *arriving* for us in the very presence of that other person, a person made in the image and likeness of God,

a person with *God's* spirit within them,  
 a person whom *God* has told us to love ..."Love your neighbor as  
 yourself."

***Arrival*** with a capital A - Christmas 2000 years ago.

***ARRIVAL*** with all capital letters - the Lord coming at the end times.

***arrival*** with simple small letters - the Lord coming to us day in and day  
 out.

The people at the time of Jesus did not really notice his coming, his  
*arrival*, as an infant.

Most of them did not "get it" even when he was an adult, preaching,  
 listening, healing, coaching, guiding, touching, smiling, sympathizing,

...

How about us today?

The Lord ***arrives*** day in and day out.

Are we noticing his ***arrivals***?

Do we care?

Are his ***arrivals*** having any impact on our thoughts, feelings and  
actions?

Here? Now? Daily?

It is Advent. We await the ***arrival*** of the Lord!

**Be Ready! Expect Jesus!**