



Be Alert!

Luke 21:25-36

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

November 29, 2015

Thought for the First Week of Advent

Scriptures: Jeremiah 33: 14-16;1

Thessalonians 3: 12, 4:2, Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

So, we have come round again to the first Sunday of Advent 2015, the beginning of our liturgical year, another year that we trust will be filled with the grace and peace of the risen Christ.

Remember how distressed we were several years ago when we were experiencing the great economic crisis. Well, most of that fear has passed and we are still praying as we have in most of our lives, but with a slightly different history. Now, we might be a little less likely to over-extend our selves in the marketplace and especially when purchasing a home.

Have you wondered lately, how we have fared during the last year? Notwithstanding the vagaries of weather and the endless political wrangling, most of us still rise each morning with a degree of eagerness and get about our worldly tasks with the trust that God will guide us safely through another day. Nothing of immense consequence has really changed. According to the old saying, “what goes around comes around and if we are Christian we wait for Christ’s coming again in all his glory, but hopefully not today because there is still too much work to do in this uncompleted world of ours.

Speaking of the season of Advent then, we knew or at least we hoped it would come round again; it always has at least in our time and in our human way of reckoning.

In some sense, the return of the season of Advent is a model or a metaphor for the working of our world, our planet, undeniably the universe itself. There is a certain circularity, a repeating nature about it all. Planets, stars and other heavenly bodies continue to move in their eternally determined fashion. Season follows on season, night on day. Interestingly, we humans take all this for granted. This is the way the universe seems to work. Round and round we go!

Involved in all this, of course is the assumption that there is a certain divine guidance to life in the universe. We have gotten used to the idea that there is and will be a certain trustworthiness in the divine plan. Despite our human destructiveness we simply assume that the planetary system of which we are a part will hold steady on its normal course and assuredly there will be another tomorrow.

Without this trust in the universe’s predictability there would be no point in rising each morning to reengage the world we call home.

The scriptures for this First Sunday in Advent have about them a certain hopeful and yet a menacing quality about them. The prophet Jeremiah predicts that in days to come, God will fulfill his promise to Israel (and us). A savior will rise out of David’s line, one who will bring justice and safety to the land

and its people. No time line is given, of course; we will know that is coming when it happens. In the meantime, the world will continue on its circular pattern. You see, there is a certain reason for hope in that assumption. By the way, **Hope** is the predominant word that surfaces during the season of Advent.

The gospel for this Sunday follows a more threatening model of the future. Luke has Jesus saying that life does not follow a circular model, actually the very opposite. At a certain point in time, there will be a sudden end to it, a great catastrophe will befall us; the heavens will be shaken; people will stand watching with great fear. In other words, Luke does not assume that life will continue on endlessly; he predicts that at a certain interval in human time, the heavens and the earth will come crashing down. Have hope, however, for this is a sign of the start of new heavens and a new earth. The Savior will make all things new.

Interestingly, then, there is certain circularity in these menacing words: the old will become new and God's universe will continue on its merry way.

The question for everybody in these in-between-times therefore is this: what shall we do while waiting. Luke gives us hope in the last line of the gospel passage: "Pray constantly for the strength to escape whatever is in prospect and stand secure before the Son of Man."

So, whether one believes in static or a circular vision of the universe, our only answer, it seems to me, is to work with what we've got. We know that our world is still going round and round and we with it. The work of the Christian and everybody else, therefore, is to make a "course correction" where we see gloom and doom. It is still a beautiful universe God has created; God depends on us to continue to make it good and productive until Christ the Son of Man returns...whenever that may be.

There is still Hope for the future.

Prayer for Peace - Japan

We praise you, God of all creation, for your love and mercy are vast and truly know no measure. Surround us with your spirit of peace and open our hearts and minds to your loving presence.

Forgive us for the times our thoughts and actions, or our complacency, keep us separated from you and from one another. Help us reach out with loving hearts and willing hands to meet the needs of others.

We pray for peace among the nations of the world, and in particular we ask your blessing on the people of Japan. May all people find acceptance and peace.

We pray for the concerns of those worshiping here today
and seek your guidance as we strive to live by your standard of peace.

Hear our collective prayers, O God, and lead us in paths of righteousness and peace. Amen.

Stewardship Thought

*"But when these signs begin to happen,
stand erect and raise your heads
because your redemption is at hand." (Luke 21:28)*

We celebrate Advent each year in preparation of the birth of Jesus, His first coming,

as we await his second coming.

In this Advent season, use the sacrament of Reconciliation to strengthen your relationship with Jesus.

It's never too late.