



# Prince of Peace Parish

Small Group Faith Sharing Material  
1st Sunday of Advent—November 29, 2020  
Sunday Readings

## Opening Prayer

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.

*(source: The Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition)*

## Mass Readings

### Reading 1 *Is 63:16B-17, 19B, 64:2-7*

You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever. Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from your ways, and harden our hearts so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage. Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you, while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for, such as they had not heard of from of old. No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen, any God but you doing such deeds for those who wait for him. Would that you might meet us doing right, that we were mindful of you in our ways! Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful; all of us have become like unclean people, all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away like the wind. There is none who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to cling to you; for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us up to our guilt. Yet, O LORD, you are our father; we are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands.

*The Word of the Lord*

*The Reading comes from a longer passage (Isaiah 63:7 to 64:12), really a psalm where the prophet calls upon God to spare the people who have lost everything. They are in Exile in Babylon; the Temple has been destroyed; Jerusalem is in ruins. Only if God sends his love again can this people be ready to receive God in their midst once more. The prophet confesses the sins of the people. They have stayed in their sins a long time. They are like those who are radically unclean among whom they live now. Even their good works are like a soiled*

*garment. They have no stability and no rootedness. No one prays anymore. They reap the rewards of the wickedness they have sowed. But, God is their Father, is he not? Did God not mold them like a potter molds a valuable piece of pottery? There is hope for them since it is the God who made them who will now rescue them.*

### Responsorial Psalm *Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19*

**R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

O shepherd of Israel, hearken,  
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.  
Rouse your power,  
and come to save us.

**R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

Once again, O LORD of hosts,  
look down from heaven, and see;  
take care of this vine,  
and protect what your right hand has planted  
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

**R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

May your help be with the man of your right hand,  
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.  
Then we will no more withdraw from you;  
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

**R. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

### Reading 2 *1 Corinthians 1:3-9*

Brothers and sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*The Word of the Lord*

Paul begins by greeting that community which he previously brought to the faith when he was among them. Now, there are problems which call for his authoritative intervention. But first, Paul has to remind them that they have been gifted by Christ. "All speech and all knowledge" refers to values which as Greeks they would have been proud to possess. But as Christians, they should rather be proud of faith, hope and love! They will only be perfected in God's ways when the Lord Jesus has returned. Now is the time to look forward to that return and to be ready, that is, sinless.

## Gospel

## Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!'"

### *The Gospel of the Lord*

*We begin the Church's calendar year with a reading taken from the latter part of the Gospel, just before the Passion Narrative in Mark. The concern is with the end-time. Jesus asks the disciples (us, the Church) to be watchful, that is faithful, since all this will take place when he comes to pass judgment on those who are unaware, asleep, that is, when they least expect it. "Watch in faithfulness!" The Church community wants to be reminded that the Second Coming is proclaimed even in the memorial of the Lord's First Coming. The Season of Advent alerts us not only to the fact that Christmas is fast approaching but that the judgment is coming speedily also.*

*The Gospel according to Mark was the first of the four Gospels to be written. It is the shortest, containing only 16 chapters. There is no infancy narrative in this Gospel. Jesus is introduced at the beginning of his public ministry. Mark alone has a title at the beginning: "The Good News (Gospel) of Jesus Christ, Son of God." Throughout there is a sense of urgency about the message. We see this in the frequent use of the word immediately. God's time is now complete; God is among us; we need to change our ways; this is the truth; this is "good news."*

*In Mark, the focus is on Jesus the Christ and on the disciples. The followers of Jesus do not come off with much honor in this Gospel. They are portrayed as slow-witted, failing to understand the message, always seeking advantages for*

*themselves, denying the need for suffering and dying, etc. Peter is the disciple among disciples! He is quick and impetuous, and he is always wrong! The message of Mark, of course, is for the Church of his day and for the Church of today. The disciples of Jesus are no different today than were his original group!*

*The Church holds up a mirror to its own face this year during the proclamations from the Gospel according to Mark. It needs to take a lesson from the teachings of Jesus and from the responses of the first disciples.*

v

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What evidence do you see in the way the Church conducts itself that it truly believes that the Second Coming of Christ is to be taken seriously? Do you really see a Church which stands in constant expectation of his return? Other than what we proclaim in the liturgy, do you think we are serious about the Day of Judgment? Why do you think we do no better than the original group of disciples in this matter?

2. Discuss the reactions of the members of your group to the message of watchfulness and the expected return of the Lord. Do any of you take it seriously? Do you have a sense of moral urgency as you engage in daily life? Are you truly aware that one must live as if the Lord were coming today? Have you come to a point in your spiritual development where you look forward *with joy* to the return of the Lord in glory?

3. Some say that the passage deals more with the present than with the future: that it really is a matter of daily accountability rather than one of final judgment. What does that mean? Do you suppose that there is some truth in that view? If we become accountable to Christ on a daily basis, what do we have to fear of the final judgment? Can we honestly say that we have become accountable to Christ in our daily living?

### Credits

Opening Prayer. *Missale Romanum, Libreria Editrice Vaticana*, 2008. *Roman Missal*, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 2011.

Readings for Mass. Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC.

Commentary and Catholic Doctrine. *Echoing God's Word*. © 2013 Rev. Clement D. Thibodeau, 12 St. Anne Ave., Caribou, ME 04736 All rights reserved.

Catechism of the Catholic Church