

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home 1st Sunday of Advent (Year B)

November 29, 2020

I say to all: ‘Watch!’
– Matthew 13:37

“...we are the clay and you the potter:
we are all the work of your hands.”
– Isaiah 64:7

Our three readings this Sunday are all centered on the need to return to God or Jesus’ return in the Second Coming. Advent is an opportunity for us to ask and answer the question: “Are we ready for the coming of the Lord?”

Third-Isaiah believes that people won’t even notice God breaking into their lives until they make a commitment to become the people of God. Unlike Third-Isaiah’s listeners, the readers of Paul’s letter don’t have to pray for God to enter their lives. God’s Spirit is already present and working. The problem is that some in Corinth aren’t working with the Spirit.

Though Mark writes about 10 years after Paul’s martyrdom, he still presumes Jesus will return in his and his readers’ lifetime, even though he’s taking a long time doing it. The key virtue for Christians around that year 70 is simple: “Be watchful! Be alert!” Be doing what Jesus expects you to do when he suddenly comes back. It may be the key virtue we need in our day.

We’re embarking on a new liturgical year this Sunday: Year B, and that means we will be receiving most of our Gospel readings from the Gospel of Mark. It’s the briefest of Gospels, and it was the first to be written. We know for certain that both Luke and Matthew used Mark as a basic outline for their Gospels’ added materials. One activity you may wish to do in your own continuing spiritual education this year is to read the whole Gospel of Mark in one setting! It has wonderful vivid accounts that are inviting to visualize and dramatize. In fact, here are two links to two great British actors who have done dramatic readings of the Gospel of Mark.

- ◆ The Gospel According to Mark recited theatrically by Alec McCowen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBw66sx6IJU>
- ◆ The Gospel According to Mark recited theatrically by David Suchet [who portrayed the Agatha Christie sleuth Hercule Poirot on PBS' Masterpiece Mystery,]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPYYfbO23uA>

Then, take a deep breath, and read it aloud yourself. It'll be an experience to remember.

In his classic *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* article on Deutero- and Third-Isaiah, the late Carol Stuhlmueller stresses that today's first reading can only be properly understood by picturing someone praying these verses standing in the middle of Jerusalem's destroyed temple. The Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar had wiped Jerusalem and its temple off the face of the earth in 586 B.C.E. and forced a relatively large percentage of Israelites into exile. They remained there until 530 B.C.E., when the Persians conquered Babylon and permitted the captives to return to the Promised Land.

But as frequently happens, what should have been an occasion of great joy actually created a problem: Most Jews in exile chose to remain in exile! Those Israelites who first returned to Jerusalem immediately "texted" their families and friends in Babylon to stay put. They'd be right back. No matter how hard it was to live in a foreign land, in this case it was better than completely rebuilding one's native land.

Third-Isaiah begins his prophetic ministry in the midst of this dilemma. How do you convince a generation of Israelites to spend their lives reconstructing a new city and a new temple? Most former captives felt they could live meaningful lives without committing themselves to carrying out this particular prophet's dream.

Yet as much as the prophet wants his people to return to the Promised Land, he sees that building a geographic place can only make sense after someone is first committed to building or rebuilding a relationship with Yahweh. The destroyed edifices are simply a sign

of Israel's destroyed covenant with Yahweh. If people refuse to rebuild the relationship, forget about the buildings. New buildings are in God's plan only if they're the outward sign of a rebuilt relationship.

As we begin Advent, the Gospel calls us to be alert and watchful. When Jesus told the disciples that they needed to be as aware in their time off as during their working hours, he let them know that serious discipleship will refocus their entire life.

Disciples who want to be ready for the master, who want to notice the signs of God's presence in the world need to imitate parents who cultivate an ongoing awareness of their little ones. Parents and those who care for the frail and elderly don't have to dote unceasingly on the person they are caring for, but they have to keep one ear constantly attuned for any call that demands a response.

In this season, so full of glitzy distractions, the Gospel reminds us that God's ongoing advent into our lives is not bound to a calendar or even to a liturgical schedule. There's no predicting the moment when God will show up in our lives. We never know at what moment the Jesus will be seeking our faithful response.

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Prelude: Center yourselves first by singing along with "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord," from the "Godspell" cast video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISKhtlg9R6I>

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

Penitential Act

Lord Jesus, you have made us whole and enriched us:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you will keep us firm to the end:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you warn us to be alert for your coming:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

Rend the heavens and come down, O God of all the ages!
Rouse us from sleep, deliver us from our heedless ways,
and form us into a watchful people, that, at the advent of your Son,
he may find us doing what is right, mindful of all you command.

Grant this through him whose coming is certain,
whose day draws near: your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN!

First, listen to “Are You Ready?” – the Rev. James Cleveland with the
Metro Mass Choir of the Gospel Music Workshop Chicago Chapter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OJicUsKvAE>

Then move on to this Sunday’s readings:

Readings for First Sunday of Advent, Year B November 29, 2020

1st Reading – The Prophet Isaiah (63:16B-17, 19B; 64:2-7)

^{16B} You, LORD, are our father, our redeemer you are named forever.

¹⁷ 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.

^{19B} Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, with the mountains quaking before you,

² while you wrought awesome deeds we could not hope for,

³ 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.

4 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;

5 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.

6 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.

7 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.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm –80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

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

2 O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.^{[L] [SEP]}

3 Rouse your power, and come to save us.^{[L] [SEP]}

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

15 Once again, O LORD of hosts,^{[L] [SEP]}
look down from heaven, and see;^{[L] [SEP]}
take care of this vine,^{[L] [SEP]}¹⁶ and protect
what your right hand has planted^{[L] [SEP]}
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.^{[L] [SEP]}

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

18 May your help be with the man of your right hand,^{[L] [SEP]}
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.^{[L] [SEP]}

19 Then we will no more withdraw from you;^{[L] [SEP]}
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.^{[L] [SEP]}

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

2nd Reading – St Paul’s 1st Letter to the Corinthians (1:3-9)

Brothers and sisters:^{[L] [SEP] 3} Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,

⁵ that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge,

⁶ as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,

⁷ so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁸ He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Gospel – Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples:^{[L] [SEP] 33} “Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.

³⁴ 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.

³⁵ Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming,^{[L] [SEP]} whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

³⁶ May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

³⁷ What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

- ◆ How is the Spirit visible in the Church today?
- ◆ In this Advent, what are you hoping for – for yourself, your loved ones, and our world?

Meditation Prompts:

- ◆ What image of God in today’s readings most appeals to you: potter, shepherd, redeemer, vinedresser, father, or returning lord?

- ◆ What does God want to reshape in your life this Advent?
- ◆ What gifts has God given you to be shared in this time of watching and waiting and physical distancing?

Then move into this week's prayers of the faithful.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – November 29, 2020
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

Presider: Brothers and Sisters, we are a people who watch and wait for Jesus' return, praying that we will be found doing God's will in our world.

Worship Leader

1. For the whole church: for a deeper commitment to service as we await the Lord's coming. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.** (RESPOND: **Give us new life, O God.**)
2. For the proud, the careless, and the wasteful: that they become aware of the responsibility to protect our environment and each another. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
3. In our concluding Sunday of Black Catholic History Month, we remember all those ancestors in faith who watched and waited for the yoke oppression to be lifted from their backs. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
4. For all who call us to wakefulness: other spiritual traditions, prophets, spiritual guides, counselors and confessors. We pray: **Give us new life us, O God.**
5. For all who wait in poverty, illness, or grief; for those who in imprison or await deportation. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
6. For a clear and equitable plan to emerge to distribute the new vaccines for the corona virus. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**

7. For those in this community whose needs have been overlooked or are unknown. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
8. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
9. For patience for all of us as we await the pandemic to abate. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
10. For an end to the Death Penalty and Human Trafficking, especially in Georgia. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
11. God's healing presence to wash over the millions of people living with HIV and AIDS today, especially the infected children, as we observe World's AIDS Day on Tuesday, December 1. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
12. For all those who are unemployed or underpaid, that they find the work they seek with a living wage and humane benefits. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
13. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
14. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Lorenzo Middleton and Kenneth W. Louis for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**
15. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Give us new life, O God.**

Presider: Ever-faithful God, we turn to you in our need. Give us the grace to be alert for your presence and aware of the needs of others. We humbly ask this in Jesus' name. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Sing or recite “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Then, behold “Jesus Christ is the Way” with Walter Hawkins & the Family:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLjyQccHe_4

Closing Prayer

Almighty God,
strengthen the resolve of your faithful people
to prepare for the coming of your Christ
by works of justice and mercy,
so that when we go forth to meet him
he may call us to sit at his right hand
and possess the kingdom of heaven.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. Let the Church say.....AMEN.

Closing Song

“Everyday is a Day of Thanksgiving” by Rev. James Cleveland with
the Gospel Music Workshop of America Mass Choir, Live in New
Orleans, 1990:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3k9Y3ZoEcMU>