

First Sunday of Advent
December 2, 2018

Today is the first Sunday of Advent and if you wanted to sum up the readings in one word, that word would be—Promise. In the first reading, God says, “I will fulfill the promise that I made to the house of Israel and Judah.” So, what is that promise He has given us? The promise of salvation and eternal life. The Church starts the new year the way we should probably start everything—with the end in mind. While we are anticipating the coming of Jesus at Christmas, we should also be alert to Jesus’ second advent, when he will return from heaven to claim his own. With the Second Advent in mind, we should be anticipating a fresh appearing of Jesus’ presence in our lives. Will we have our attention focused on Jesus, or will we be diverted by the secular trappings of Christmas that ignores he ever existed, or could ever again appear to us? We need to take the time to prepare for Jesus’ appearance in our lives.

Both the second reading today and the Gospel tell us how to prepare. The Gospel says, “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.” And Paul says in the second reading, “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.”

Today, God is calling us, asking us to make a promise; to enter into a relationship. Keeping the end in mind, we know that Jesus will come again to judge us on how we lived our lives.

Let us pray as we dwell in this time period between Jesus’ first and second coming, that there might be a reappearing and strengthening of Jesus in our hearts and lives. And that this appearance will quicken our hearts with love and stir our free will into action.

Cliff Shehorn