



First Sunday of Advent
† Sunday 2nd December 2018

Cycle of Prayer: Migrants, refugees and human life

Keynote: Longing, waiting eagerly for the Coming of Christ

Prophet Jeremiah 33: 14-16

These words from a collection of the prophet's Messianic oracles were added to the text after Jeremiah's time. They refer to the integrity of God, to the God who will fulfil the Promise made to King David. The day will come and one of David's descendants '*will practice honesty and integrity in the land, and Judah will be saved and Israel shall dwell in confidence*'. Like the People of Israel of old, we wait, with eagerness, looking forward to better times, for the coming saviour king; their Messiah and our saviour – the anointed one – the *Christos*. As we begin this season of Advent there is expectation and hope in the air.

Responsorial Psalm 24 (25) – a contrite prayer for forgiveness

First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians 3: 12- 4:2

This text is part of a three-fold blessing in the style of the letter writing at the time. Paul asks that the Lord will '*so confirm your hearts in holiness, that you may be blameless in the sight of God the Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints*'. Paul, and for his readers within the early Christian communities, expected that Christ would return soon. There is an urgency in his plea that you, '*make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants*'. We are being urged today by the apostle not to forget the instructions we have been given on the authority of Jesus Christ. Indeed we would do well to remember and act upon them in the weeks to come!

Gospel according to Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

'*Your liberation is near at hand*' says the evangelist '*watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with ...the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly like a trap.*' Somehow these words are ever more relevant in these days as we face the pressures of life. The words of Jesus, speaking to his disciples so long ago, may sound apocalyptic or strange to our ears, they are suggestive of confusion and disorder: '*There will be signs,*' says Jesus '*in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the oceans and the waves; men dying of fear as they await the menaces of the world ...then they will see the Son of Man coming ...with power and great glory*'. However the evangelist – Luke – lest we are transfixed and immobilised by fear at the awesome prospect of the coming of God, encourages the faithful to have confidence, to hold their heads boldly erect: '*Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen ...and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man*'.

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Note: Sunday Reading cycle C starts today

Weekday Lectionary cycle 1 tomorrow