

SERMON FOR ADVENT 1A 2025

Fr Jordan

Isaiah 2:1-5

Romans 13:11-14

Matthew 24:36-44

The Church moves in time, some say a rhythm. We have ordinary time. The time that marks the Sundays between the great feasts of the church. We have Christmas time, Lent, and now we enter Advent time. Time isn't just an important part of the church's life but also our own.

We often speak of "the right time" for something to happen. It has nothing to do with the clock, but with circumstances surrounding the event.

Time is a curious thing. Sometimes it flies, and sometimes it drags. Yet the clock keeps moving at the same speed day in and day out.

Advent is all about time, as today's readings make clear.

"In days to come" says the first reading.

"You know what time it is, how it is now the moment...." says our epistle reading.

And the Gospel continues..."About that day and hour no one knows..." "you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." "If you had known at what time of the night the thief was coming...."

What these readings are wanting us to focus on is that God is present in the here and now and can break in upon our time just as he has broken in on times past.

Advent reminds us of the God who has come to us once and for all in the person of Jesus Christ. So, what we do at this time of advent is firstly look back at the revealing of God in this particular human being at a particular time in history.

Advent also reminds us of the God who will come at the end of time. So we look forward to the great revealing of God in glory at the end of time.

Advent also reminds us of the God who comes in the present time. So we look in the midst of this present life to see God with us in our own day.

And it is here that we see our God being the God of all time, past, present and future. And because God comes in all times to people there is too a sense of urgency about time in Advent. Though this urgency isn't as foreign to us as we may think.

We live in an age of the here and now. We cannot wait for anything to happen. It must be immediate or it is not worth waiting for. The speed at which we expect to live demands an instant lifestyle.

We know what is happening on the other side of the world, as it happens. It's immediate. We want information about a subject, so we go to the internet and expect to find our answer instantly, or through an AI chatbot. There is a great sense of the here and now about modern life. There is a great sense of urgency about modern life too. We sometimes complain about this attitude to life and wish the pace of life was slower, as we knew it in times past. But interestingly enough instant and urgent are Advent themes. This season of the year is all about time and its effect on us. It's about using that sense of the instant and the urgent in our faith as well as our lives.

The rush to Christmas has already started of course. And while we complain every year about the rush, it is also a sign to us of what our Christian life is about. Remember those Christmas Carols which bid us hasten to the manger. Rush there to see the Christ-child. Well Advent is urging us to rush again to see the Christ. Not at the manger this time, but to rush to see his life in ours, now, in this present time. And there's a real urgency to see the Christ dwelling in our midst. So where can we see these signs?

Today we recall that beautiful utopia of humankind found in the text of Isaiah. It speaks of God being at the centre of all life and history. It speaks of good relationships with God and with one another. These good relationships are expressed in the fact that weapons of war are no longer needed. The weapons are turned into implements for food production. The implements of death become implements of life.

This evocative text bids us to be the people of God committed to working for a more just and peaceful society.

And In today's Epistle, Paul too presents this sense of urgency. His response is to urge us to live lives worthy of the Gospel, always ready and waiting.

Waiting for what we may ask? The new Jerusalem promised by Isaiah in today's First Reading.

In the Church, all nations stream to the God of Jacob, to worship and seek wisdom in the House of David. From the Church goes forth his word of instruction, the light of the Lord—that all might walk in his paths toward that eternal day when night will be no more.

By our Baptism we have been made children of the light and day. It is time we start living like it: throwing off the fruitless works of darkness, rejecting those things that have an unhealthy control over us, and walking by the light of his grace. The hour is late as we begin a new Advent. Let us begin again in this Eucharist.

As we sing in today's Psalm, "let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord." Let us give thanks to his name, keeping watch for his coming, knowing that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

These are the signs of God all around us. We need to take time to look for them. The time is now, not next week, not after Christmas, not next year, but now. There is an urgency about this message. We are to hasten to see Christ in our midst now, in this present time.

This Advent, perhaps you can remember every time you look at your watch or the clock on the wall, that the time is now. At any moment Jesus may break into our time and change our lives. Our readiness to receive him is shown by our readiness.

Time to watch and wait, for Christ has come and he will come again.