

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



JEREMIAH 33:14-16

PSALM 25:4 – 5, 8 – 9, 10, 14

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12 – 4:2

LUKE 21:25-28, 34-36

REFLECTION

Movies often portray the end of the world with great destruction, frantic screams, and terrorized faces. People die of many things, but today the Gospel says that people will die, not from what they see, but of fright “in anticipation of what is coming upon the world” (Luke 21:26). In the past few years, many natural disasters have occurred and people wondered if the end of the world was upon us. As disasters occur, it is natural to pray for those affected and be thankful that you yourself are okay. Each time something terrible happens, it is good to pray for others, help if you can, and be aware of what you have and what you think you need. But are you stuck? Fearful of losing those you love? Or, are you so focused on the future that you miss the chance to slow down to help others?

Our faith offers us a gift that isn't present in every other faith tradition. Because of Jesus we believe in life after death. So, in this life we prepare for the next life. We are each asked to have the strength to stand before Jesus. Tribulations all have different faces. You could be hearing gossip. You could choose to filter it or stop it. It might be seeing an older student be unfriendly to a younger student. You could choose to step in and help. Sometimes our tribulation is choosing to do the right thing when something more fun is out there. In order to be “blameless in holiness” (1 Thessalonians 3:13) we need to look around us and first choose to see. It isn't easy, but making the right choice does refine our souls to be brighter for Christ.

ACTION

Advent begins today, a time of joyful waiting and preparation to see the Christ child face to face. As new parents have to baby-proof their house before their child comes, spend some time looking at your habits and attitudes. Is your life too Christ-proof that the light of Christ struggles to seep in? Clear away the unnecessary roughness so that you can be ready to embrace the newborn baby in your heart.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- What things about the future worry you? What, if anything, can you do about these things?
- How do your actions portray your choices to follow Christ?
- What more can you do to stand firm and conduct yourself in a manner pleasing to God?