

Our *Advent Reflections*
follow the 3-year cycle
so that each booklet has
different reflections

ADVENT

COME,
LORD JESUS,
COME

WALKING
THROUGH THE
ADVENT SEASON
TOGETHER

REVISED
COMMON
LECTIONARY
YEAR C

REFLECTIONS FOR WALKING THROUGH
THE ADVENT SEASON TOGETHER

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FIRST SUNDAY

of Advent YEAR C

November 29, 2015

For Reflection:

Where is the place of your own distress and confusion, your own fear and foreboding? Do you have the courage to wait for the coming of Christ there?

THE DARKNESS OF WAITING

The Gospel reading for the first Sunday of Advent is an alarming one—full of violent images and ominous predictions. It is a harsh beginning to such a holy season and if it wasn't for the discipline of following the lectionary schedule, we might be tempted to avoid it altogether.

But the truth is, the scenario described here is much closer to our reality these days than the dreamy images of beautiful angels, lowing cattle and nursing mothers that we associate with this season. At the global level, our days and nights are filled with images of the unresolved tensions of clashing nations, economic upheaval, violent interpersonal conflict, and alarming weather patterns. At a more personal level, we are plagued by our own confusion and distress about conflicts we can't resolve, questions we can't answer, and moral failure among ourselves and others that cause us to question the very Gospel message we preach.

This passage helps us to be honest about the places in our own lives that are full of confusion and distress, fear and foreboding. It tells us that in these very places we are to wait for the Son of Man to come into our lives with power and glory. Advent is not the time to run away and hide our heads in the sand. It is a time to stand up and raise our heads because our redemption is drawing near. It is a time for us to be awake and alert so we will not miss the Light that dawns in the dark places of our own lives that feel desolate, confusing and beyond hope.

Jeremiah 33:14-16

- 14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah.
- 15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
- 16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

Psalms 25:1-10

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
- 2 O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.
- 3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
- 4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.
- 5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
- 6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.
- 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!
- 8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
- 9 He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?

10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.

12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Luke 21:25-36

25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory.

28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;

30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.

31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly,

35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

PRAYER

For the darkness of waiting

of not knowing what is to come

of staying ready and quiet and attentive,

we praise you, O God:

For the darkness and the light

are both alike to you.

Amen