

## **Advent and the Universal Call to Holiness** (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C)

### **1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2—The Call to Holiness and the Second Coming**

<sup>12</sup> May the Lord *make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men*, as we do to you, <sup>13</sup> so that he may establish your hearts *unblamable in holiness* before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. <sup>1</sup> Finally, brethren, we beseech and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. <sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

[<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from unchastity (Greek *porneia*); <sup>4</sup> that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no man transgress, and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you. <sup>7</sup> For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness.] (1 Thess 3:12-4:2)

1. Charity: through grace, “charity” or “love” can “increase” (Greek *pleonazō*) (3:12)
2. Holiness: hearts established blameless in “holiness” (Greek *hagiosynē*) (3:13)
3. Advent: the “coming” (Greek *parousia*; Latin *adventus*) of Christ (3:13)
4. Sanctification: “will of God” = your “sanctification” (Greek *hagiasmos*) (4:3)
4. Unchastity: abstain from “unchastity” (Greek *porneia*) (4:3)
5. Self-Control: “each know how to control his own body” (4:4)
6. Gentile Culture: not like the “heathen” who do not “know God” (4:5)
7. Universal Call: God has created us not for (moral) “uncleanness” but “holiness” (4:7)

### **The Living Tradition**

Vatican II: Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state—though each in his own way—are called by the Lord to that *perfection of sanctity* by which the Father himself is perfect. (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11)

Catechism: “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.” *All are called to holiness*: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (CCC 2013, quoting Matt 5:48)

## Questions for Discussion and Reflection (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C)

1. Do you ordinarily connect growth in “holiness” with preparing for Advent? Are you ready for the Second Coming of Christ? According to Paul, how should we prepare for the Second Advent?

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## For Further Reading

1. Nathan Eubank. *First and Second Thessalonians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2019.