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First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16
Response: **"To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul"** (Ps.24:1)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 24:4-5,8-10,14..
Second Reading: I Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
Gospel: Luke 21:25-28. 34-36.

This new season of Advent spells the coming of the Lord. We understand his coming in three senses. He came long ago as a baby when he was born into this world on Christmas day. He comes as Risen Lord since Easter, into our lives today. He will come as Son of God in all his glory on the Last Day.

What is the meaning of the coming of the Lord? It spells a new age, a time of renewal. God tells his prophet that he **"will make a virtuous branch grow for David"** (Jer.33:15). From this root of David will spring forth a Messiah (Christ) and a whole new messianic age.

We shall become a new city, a new Jerusalem, a city with the name of God, יהוה צדקנו (Yahweh tsideqenu), Lord of our Righteousness, translated as **"Lord-our-integrity"** (Jer.33:16)

The true believer follows God's way and waits for the coming of the Lord. He places all his trust in God. **"To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul"** (Ps.24:1).

He trusts in God because God **"has revealed his covenant"** (Ps.24:14) and God is true to his word, hesed we'emet i.e. **faithfulness and love** (Ps.24:10).

Paul writing in the Messianic age speaks of how we have to live and prepare for the coming of the Lord (*Parousia*, his second coming). The key is holiness, involving vigilance and self-discipline. **"Confirm your hearts in holiness..when our Lord Jesus comes"** (I Thess.3:13)

We have to grow in holiness, preparing ourselves. **"Make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live; life that God wants"** (I Thess 4:2). Improving your life during Advent for Christmas means an improvement of your whole life for the end of time.

The Lord himself prophesies his second coming. **"There will be signs"** (Lk.21:25), such as cosmic disorder and panic evoking the end of the world. Then people will see **"the Son of Man coming in a cloud"** (Lk.21:25).

It will be a great day for the believer **"because liberation is at hand"** (Lk.21:25), having been faithful, holy and vigilant, to **"stay awake and pray at all times"** (Lk.21:36). He is not one to be caught sleeping but looking with the eyes of God.

Listen what the Messiah is saying about the end-times, in the **Gospel** (Lk.21:25-28,34-38).

In the **Eucharist** we proclaim the death of the Lord 'until he comes' (I Cor. 11:26).

Church teaches us to be holy, vigilant, pray and be ready for the second coming of the Lord.
(Doctrine)

Make a resolution on how prepare yourself during this season of Advent. **(Witness)**

FOR THE CHILDREN

The Gospel shows us the Lord speaking about his Second Coming. (*Scripture*)

Explain the teaching of holiness and the meaning of vigilance . (*Doctrine*)

In the *Eucharist* we encounter the Risen Lord and prepare for his Second Coming.

Our *Witness* consists in how we wait for the Lord, watch and pray and serve one another.

FOR TEENAGERS (*Christian Praxis*)

Name the Present Action: *What is Advent? What does the season mean to you?*

Your Story and Vision: Share yours and others' experiences of waiting for the Lord.

Church's Story and Vision: Give Church's teaching and Tradition on Advent and coming of the Lord.

Yours and Church's Vision: Discuss how you see yourself and the Church during this season of Advent and preparing for the coming of the Lord.

RCIA

The observance of Advent as a special time of the year goes back as far as the 4th century A.D. when converts to Christianity were preparing themselves for baptism. In later Middle Ages, Advent was more specifically associated with preparing for the Second Coming of the Lord and seen as a pre-Christmas season of Lent, devoted to prayer and fasting. In associating it with Christmas, we tend to focus more on the first coming of Christ in Bethlehem. Any one of these dimensions of his coming should make us aware of all dimensions: "*Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus*" (*Apoc.22.20*).

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I was a parish priest in Durban. It was Christmas Eve, a time that I didn't mind knocks on the door and unexpected visitors because many were bringing me gifts. I also received phone calls promising me presents. Unexpectedly, the doorbell rang and there stood a bloodied man. He had been hijacked, beaten and bleeding. My reaction was to let him wait outside for the police. Fortunately, the Lord graced me with a sympathetic moment and I showed him the bathroom and replaced his bloodstained clothes. Somehow that Christmas Eve I was privileged to experience the coming of the Lord in a special way. I know the Lord comes but how often have I the grace to recognize and serve him?

St. Benedict, monastic and beloved patron of the pope, tells us how to answer a knock on the door. Say "*Thanks be to God*" or *ask for a blessing*'(i), '*for the Lord may have sent the stranger*'(ii), for '*you to aid those in trouble*'(iii), and '*not to forsake charity*.'(iv)

(i) THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT: *Ch.66*. Transl. A.C. Meisel & M.L. del Mastro. Image Books, Doubleday. NY. 1943. p.102.

(ii) *Opus cit. Ch.61. p.96.*

(iii) *Opus cit. Ch.4:18. p.52.*

(iv) *Opus cit. Ch.4.26 p.52.*

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina knew her aunt was going to have a baby and she certainly understood the waiting for it to come. She saw the baby clothes her mother bought and her anxious uncle who kept telling she is going to have another cousin. Most of all she saw her favourite aunt grow and knew that she was carrying a baby. What surprised me was when I tried to explain Advent to her she simply said it was like waiting for Mary's baby.

Who would have thought of Advent as the pregnancy of the Blessed Virgin Mary?

IMPORTANT WORD: "**Advent**"

'Advent' comes from Latin word meaning "coming." It is a season that consists of four Sundays before Christmas and considered as a time of spiritual reflection, expectation and preparing oneself for the coming of the Lord. Interestingly, when Christ was born, some magi from the ancient East, were waiting for a great Light, "*when Mazda comes forth for the world's winning of Right through a powerful deliverance*"(i) and now "*Hast thou come to us, thou, O Holy One.*"(ii)

(i) THE ZEND-AVESTA. *The Gatha Ustavaiti*: Yasna XLVI.3. Charles Horne. Kessinger Publishing, USA. p.39.

(ii) *Opus cit. The Vendidad*: Fargard XIX. V.1-32. p.147.

N.B: The *Zend-Avesta* is the Holy Scripture of *Zoroastrianism*, an ancient religion of the East. *Magi* are the priests.

Watchword: **“They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud” (Lk.21:27)**

Hebrew: יֵרְאוּ אֶת־בֶּן־הָאָדָם בָּא בְעָנָן Yire'u eth-ben-ha'adam b'a ve'anan

Greek: ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχομένον ἐν νεφέλῃ.

Opsontai ton huion tou anthropou erchomenon en nephele.

Latin: **Videbunt Filium hominis venientem in nube.**

Portuguese: **Verao vir o Filho do homem numa nuvem.**

Spanish: **Veran al Hijo dei Hombre que vendra en una nube.**

French: **On vera le Fils de l'homme arriver sur un nuage.**

Zulu: **Bayakubona iNdodana yomuntu iza efini.**

Sotho: **Jwale ba tla bona Mora Motho a etla a le lerung.**

Afrikaans: **Sal hulle die Seun van die mens op 'n wolk sien kom.**

German: **Werden sie sehen den Menschensohn kommen in einer Wolke**