

Advent first Sunday: You may remember the TV reality show named “Endurance”. The contestants live in a remote location and participate in various mental and physical challenges. The outcome of the competition determines which players are eliminated, and the winner receives an all-inclusive paid vacation package to an exotic location as the prize.

Christian life also is a test of endurance/perseverance. Unlike the reality show, it is real life. There are various mental, spiritual, and physical challenges awaiting them. Unlike a vacation package as reward, the test reward is eternal life. Are you ready for the challenge of a life of endurance?

Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year and the great season of waiting. Christian life has a permanent Advent quality. In General, it is a waiting for the Lord, praying- “*maranatha*”, come Lord Jesus! Today’s gospel is full of expressions like: *Beware, keep alert, keep awake, be vigilant!* And why? for you do not know when the Master comes. How do we keep alert? Advent is, perhaps most immediately, a preparation for *the coming of the Lord*; are we getting ourselves ready to receive the Christ who wants, even now, to visit us, who comes to us, to be born in us. Well, how do we do this?

First reading: Isaiah says: “In days to come, the mountain of the Lord will be established as the highest mountain”. This couldn’t be simpler and more challenging. When Christ comes to rule over our life, he must be the highest value. His house must be on the highest mountain. Now, Let’s be honest; Is there something or someone of highest value in your life? might be-Your family, career, your wealth, your country, your own Ego. When Christ takes over your life, he wants to be Lord of - whole of your life, and not parts.. “*Come, lets climb the Lord’s mountain*”. Friends, *I would invite you to have this beautiful image remain in your mind throughout this advent season.*

Streaming of all the nations toward Jerusalem/ temple, is symbol of *all the elements of your life* streaming towards Christ. I mean, your mind, your emotions, your will, your personal plans and projects, your friendships, entertainments and hobbies. Yes, once Jesus is established as the highest value of your life, then everything else in you, centers around and streams toward *that great value*. The Lord demands to be the Lord of your life. He is not coming as a minor interest among many other. Is Christ the highest mountain in my life? That will truly challenge us. Christ will not me limited to “Sunday alone, for an hour or so”. He says: just everything in your life, public and private, be subordinated to him.

Friends, therefore, our advent preparation is just this: *re-ordering of your life*. As a part of our spiritual activity during advent season, try to ask yourself the question; does all aspects of my life some way streaming towards the Lord? If not, you need to do some changes in your life!

Then, there is the good news: Now, to some degree, all of us, sinners, are in war with ourselves. My mind wants this but my body wants something else; Friends, *when Christ is not the center of our whole life*, we become a jungle of conflicting desires and aspirations. But, when the Lord is my highest mountain, all the elements that makes us up, find harmony. Why, because they are all subordinated to the same end, same goal. Everything will be ordered to Christ, streaming towards the Lord as the center.

B&S, Advent-the 25 days- is the time to go up to the mountain of the Lord; in order to re-order our life for his coming, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. Come, Let us climb the mountain of the Lord, walk in the light of the Lord! Let's get ready, Lets be alert, awake and vigilant, because the Lord is coming, our salvation is near! Amen!