

First Sunday of Advent: “The Grace of waiting”

Christian life is a test of endurance. Unlike the old TV reality show, named “Endurance”, it is real life. There are various mental, spiritual, and physical challenges awaiting it. Our question today is: 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. Modern culture often views waiting as an agitation, yet Advent invites us to transform it into an opportunity for grace. While we start our preparations for Christmas, we are invited to get into the season’s deeper purpose which is to train us for the “profound waiting” for Christ’s Second Coming. Basically, avoiding the distractions of consumerism, through prayer and the sacraments, we must actively prepare our hearts, anticipating His return with the focused joy of a bride and groom.

In our First reading, Isaiah invites: *“Come, let us climb the mountain of the Lord, that he may instruct us and we may walk in his ways”*. This couldn’t be simpler and more challenging. When Christ comes to rule over our life, he must be the highest value. Now, Let’s ask ourselves; Is he the highest value in my life? Or something or someone else? -might be- Your spouse, family, career, your wealth, your country, your own Ego. When Christ takes over your life, he wants to be Lord of your whole life. Friends, *we can keep this beautiful image in mind throughout this advent season. “Come, let’s climb the Lord’s mountain”*.

Climbing the mountain of the Lord, is symbol of *all the elements of your life* streaming towards Christ. I mean, your mind and heart with its desires, 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 others.

Friends, that's why Paul is making a gentle invitation to us, "*B&S, it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep, for our salvation is near...throw away the works of darkness and put on the armor of Christ*". As a part of our spiritual activity during advent season, let us equip ourselves with the **armor of Christ**: which includes the '*belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, sandals of the peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Word of God*.(Eph 6:10-18).He describes these as spiritual tools for Christians to use to stand against evil forces and overcome temptation. The four-fold path is: wake up, clean up, lighten up and dress up with the armor of Christ.

To some degree, all of us are at war with ourselves. Friends, *when Christ is not the center of our whole life*, we become a space of conflicting aspirations. But, when the Lord is my highest value, all the elements that make us up, find harmony and order.

B&S, Advent-the 25 days- is the time to go up to the mountain of the Lord; to prepare our life for his coming, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. Come, Let's climb the mountain of the Lord, let us walk in the light of the Lord! Let's put on the armor of Christ, that the evil one will not overpower us. Let's be awake and be prepared to welcome the Lord who is coming. Amen!