

# Advent: Phase One of a Rich Season

Part II  
By Father Robert J. Kennedy

Advent is a season of great contradiction. In a time of frenzied shopping, mailing and partying, it calls us to wait. In a time of painful human need and cold, it challenges us to hope. In a time of deepening darkness, it calls us to rejoice in the light.

As we wrote last week, Advent is not simply, or even primarily, a preparation for the birthday of the baby Jesus. For the post-resurrection Christian, the Advent Season is the powerful gathering of all the forces of nature and faith, joined in an expectant view toward the future when Christ will be manifested to every nation in all his splendor.

What are these "forces of nature and faith" that make Advent so rich a season? The days grow shorter and shorter; darkness closes us in. We fall victim to elements of darkness —

fear and uncertainty, isolation from our neighbors, the unsettling mystery of the cold that accompanies the darkness, the death of the earth and its burial under a blanket of snow.

No doubt it is the groanings of winter's advance that drives us to seek the light and warmth, but we are also coaxed to see the promise contained in our experience. Morning follows the night, springtime the winter, neighborliness the isolation. And so, in the midst of darkness we light the hearth, decorate with electric bulbs, lay taper to the Advent Wreath.

Advent, however, does not relieve our apprehensions in the dark. On the contrary, it calls our attention to them, forcing us to feel our way through those insecure and wondering places of our lives. Yet, while we are left to stumble in the darkness, it is not an aimless journey. We move in a definite direction. There is a

promise. A light flickers at the edge of the forest. We light the purple candles, week by week, in expectant hope that the promise will be fulfilled.

That promise is the full revelation of the Father's love in Christ. This revelation was begun with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, God's great act of love by which he reached out and became one of us. But it was only the beginning. As followers of Jesus, we wait still for the full and final moment of his speaking to us as Lord of all history, time and creation. The gift of Bethlehem draws the focus of our waiting beyond that small town to the gift of his brimming presence about to be shown in all its transfiguring fullness. This is the basis of the expectant hope of Advent: the brimming presence of Christ in our life an world.

Hope is the consuming anticipation that all of the good possibilities of what we now experience will be fully realized. Hope compels us, in addition, to actually work at bringing that potential to completion. It is not the futile route of daydreaming, but the careful vigil that brings about the good. True hope knows that the dim glimpse of the presence of Christ in the present will widen into full vision in the future.

Insofar as Advent celebrates this hope, it stands in contradiction to the world. We, as an Advent people of hope, are hope's proclaimers and prophets. Our world is in such pain because the absence of God is so vividly felt. We Christians feel that pain because we are living in the world. But we know the paradox that God's presence often comes under the cover of darkness and defeat; he is often most present when he seems most distant. The Advent season's concern is to linger over the fact of his presence, to ponder something of the depth of its meaning.

Advent is a prayer of hope for

### National Hotel

Routes 20A and 39, Cuylerville, N.Y. Host to travelers since 1837. Located in historical Genesee Valley. Two miles Southwest of Genesee. Steaks, chops broiled in the open pit. Prime ribs, seafoods, large entree selection. Open weekdays 5 to 11 P.M. Sun. 12 to 9 P.M.

## Hicks

Home Heating Inc.

271-7414 271-4650

## INSIGHTS On Pastoral Liturgy

the future coming of the Lord, based upon the reality of our experience of his presence now, here, in our midst, with us, Emmanuel.

tinged with nausea and awkwardness and anxiety. The face of the one who is to come cannot yet be seen. Still, the presence lies hidden and growing in mystery. Advent, like the pregnant Virgin, is short on explanation and heavy with meaning.

Finally, Advent is a season of pregnancy. Pregnancy isn't a very comfortable thing. It's hope is

Look, Ma, no hands!



In more ways than one: digital read-out, of course. And now the Flip-Switch Pulsar reports the time at the flip of a wrist: no hands needed for button-pushing there either! Buttons for date and seconds. In 14 karat gold-filled, \$395. Or stainless steel, \$295. Also available: traditional Pulsar Date Command, 14 karat gold-filled, \$395. Or stainless steel, \$295.

Something Beautiful for Everyone.™

Hersheberg's

Fine Jewelers  
Since 1929

Rochester

Midtown Plaza • Longridge Mall  
Also: Eastview Mall, Victor

### WORD FOR SUNDAY



Fr. Albert Shamon

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mk. 1:18-8, (R1) Is. 40:1-5, 9-11. (R2) 2 Pt. 3:8-14.

The first reading for the Second Sunday of Advent is from a prophet called Second Isaiah. He was very probably one of the greatest thinkers and poets in the Old Testament. Second Isaiah was one of the exiles in Babylon. He wrote between 548-540 B.C. His poems make up chapters 40 to 55 in the Book of Isaiah.

There were many reasons for calling the author of chapters 40 to 55 a Second Isaiah. His poems exude the thought and spirit of the first Isaiah (742-687 B.C.). Perhaps a better reason is that he brings the prophecies of the first Isaiah to completion. As the apostles after Pentecost could from hindsight interpret the words and deeds of Jesus correctly, so Second Isaiah from the vantage point of the Babylonian Captivity and the liberation therefrom could unfold the meaning of the prophecies of the first Isaiah.

The first reading narrates the vocation of the prophet. He hears several voices, each delineating his mission. One voice says, "Give comfort to my people." That was the one message the Jews needed to hear. A generation of slavery had reduced them to bruised reeds, smoldering wicks, all but shorn of faith and hope. Another voice says, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" Get the people ready for a repeat of what happened in Egypt — a new exodus, a deliverance, liberation. When the prophet, like Moses, thinks to raise his voice in protest, another voice thunders, "Cry out at the top of your voice." Cry out what? The good news of the coming liberation of the Jews from exile — their redemption is at hand.

What a wonderful reading for the Advent season which celebrates the coming of the Lord to free us from the slavery of sin and selfishness.

Sacred Scripture celebrates three exoduses. Two were political, and from physical slavery: the exodus from Egypt and the exodus from Babylon. In Scripture both deliverances are called "redemption," "liberation." Second Isaiah points back to the Egyptian exodus as

proof that another exodus can and will take place from Babylon. Very significantly, St. Mark hearkens back to this Babylonian exodus, promised by Isaiah, as a type of the new exodus that Jesus brings — a spiritual liberation from the enslavement of sin.

In the light of the exoduses in the Old Testament, we can better understand the concept of redemption. For us redemption is both an act and a process. Essentially it is an action of Christ, a liberation (typified by the liberations from Egypt and Babylon) — but a spiritual liberation, from sin, effected once and for all at baptism.

But this is only the beginning of redemption.

Man, after sin, remains still a very disorganized person: his knowledge often wallows in error, his love ends in self and in lust, his acts in crime (typified by the rebellions of the Hebrews in the desert of Sinai after the exodus from Egypt) and the apathy of the Jews after the restoration from Babylon).

Hence redemption is also an ongoing process: it is a daily dying and a daily rising-dying to selfishness and rising to otherness — till hopefully by the time of physical death, we shall be living, no longer we, but Christ. Thus shall we be able to rise once and forever to eternal glory — redeemed!

"So, beloved, while waiting for this, make every effort to be found without stain or defilement, and at peace in his sight" (R2).

**CLOVER**  
1612 RIDGE RD. E.  
Near Goodman

SAVE \$101.00

100% ALL SLATE TABLES

**GUEMASTER'S 76R POOL TABLE**

**\$449**

**CLOVER**  
Near Goodman  
1612 Ridge Rd. East  
MON.-WED.-FRI. 10-8  
TUES.-THURS.-SAT. 10-5

Only 23 Days 'til Christmas

**GUEMASTER-LIBERTY 100% SLATE POOL TABLE**

**\$399** Save 17 1/2%

**IMPERIAL EBONITE POOL TABLE**

A TRUE TOURNAMENT TABLE EXQUISITE BURGUNDY CLOTH CLOVER'S PRICE

SHOULD SELL FOR \$1400

**749**

**WE OFFER LIFETIME GUARANTEE ON ALL OUR POOL TABLES!**  
We Aim to Please You

**DON'T BE FOOLED BY IMITATION SLATE TABLES—WE SELL ONLY 100% FULL Slate Tops**

HEADQUARTERS FOR EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO PLAY POOL

**TRY US YOU'LL LIKE US VERY MUCH!**

4-MAN AIR HOCKEY

**\$179**

AIR-SHUFFLE

**\$99**

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

Save \$\$\$

GAMBIT TABLES AS LOW AS

**\$99**

PUMPER POOL

Save \$\$\$