



Mercy at Advent

Sister Joyce McGinn (left) and Sister Nancy Whitley, officials of the Rochester Sisters of Mercy, inventory the goods to be offered at the Sisters of Mercy booth in the Advent Festival sponsored by the East Rochester Association of Churches, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5, at East Rochester High School.

Fr. Albert Shamon



Word for Sunday

Waiting For the Lord To Arrive

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

"Advent" means "to come." Sunday's readings refer to three comings of the Lord: to His coming in the past to free His people from the physical slavery of the Babylonian Captivity (R1); to His coming in the present to free His people from the spiritual slavery of sin (R3); and lastly, to His coming in the future to judge His people (R2).

Second Isaiah (R1) pictures God coming like a mighty monarch to comfort His people by freeing them and returning them home to Jerusalem from Babylon.

In ancient and medieval days, kings regularly traveled around their country in grand style. The idea was to impress their subjects and strengthen their loyalty. So they would come with all pomp and pageantry, with courtiers and soldiers. Were the king truly great and powerful, work-gangs would have been sent ahead to smooth the road for his majesty. Valleys would be filled, mountains leveled, rough ways made smooth, and crooked paths straightened. Since Isaiah's call is to get ready for the coming of the King, this reading is most fitting for Advent.

The gospel re-echoes the same call. "Make ready the way of the Lord." John, the last of the Old Testament prophets, authenticates Jesus as the Messiah foretold by the prophets. He is come to free mankind from the spiritual slavery of sin. We make ready for His coming by repentance. "Repentance" means "acknowledging our selfishness and disobedience." This will lead to the forgiveness of sin.

To urge us not to delay our repentance. Peter (R2)

reminds us of the final coming of the Lord to judge the world. The apostles believed this coming of the Lord, the Parousia, was quite imminent. When it did not happen, some Christians grew impatient and others even became skeptical and wondered if it would ever happen.

Peter responded: "Make no mistake. Though delayed, Christ will most certainly come — unexpectedly and suddenly, like a thief. He delays not because of indifference, but because of love — to give us time to repent. So every effort should be made to be found without stain — while waiting."

Waiting is never easy. We can't wait till we grow up. We can't wait till school is out. We can't wait to get married. We can't wait till pay day. We can't wait till the end of Mass. Children can't wait till Christmas. Adults can't wait till it's over.

One Sunday morning, a wife handed her young husband the children's clothes and said, "Here, you get the kids ready today and I'll go out and honk the horn."

Christian waiting should be fruitful. It should not be the pain-in-the-neck waiting as at a red light or at the supermarket checkout or in a line for a ticket to a Broadway musical. It should be an active waiting during which we strive to be holy in conduct and devotion.

A man who lived in California was told by his fiancée who lived about 1,000 miles away, "I can't wait to see you." Though he told her he did not have money to travel, she persisted. "I can't wait to see you." This is a true story. The man didn't have the money for travel so he walked the 1,000 miles. It took him 30 days walking. She was right when she said, "I can't wait to see you." By the time he had arrived, she had left town with another man. Well?

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