



BIBLE STUDY FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR C

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“And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.” Luke: 21:27-28. NABRE

Reading I: Jeremiah 33:14-16

LORD, WE WAIT FOR JUSTICE. The theme for this Advent is, “Lord We Wait for ...” The purpose of this theme is to inaugurate a term of active waiting as we prepare to receive Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. This form of active waiting includes personal and communal acts designed to prepare a deeper place for Jesus Christ in our lives. Each week we will focus on an attitude of prayer, fasting, and service, by implementing some of the social teachings of the Church. We will concentrate on a virtue that is a variation of the general theme; “*Lord we wait for...*”. During this first week of advent the theme is, “Lord We Wait for Justice.”

The first reading reminds us that God is just and will not abandon, us even if we fail Him. The prophecy of Jeremiah was intended to encourage

If You Want Justice, Work for Peace.

the Jews to trust in the mercy of God despite all their tribulations. At the time of this prophecy, the Judeans were a vanquished people in exile to Babylon. (587 B.C.) Jeremiah, the youthful prophet, preached against the Judean Kings. The people of Judah were concerned only with their own power and wealth. They ignored the things of God. Verses 14-16 reminded Jeremiah’s countrymen that God is faithful, and His justice does not depend on their infidelity. He preached that despite their sins, God will still honor His promises to Abraham ([Gen. 12:3](#)) and to David ([2 Sam. 7, 16](#) and [Ps. 72:7, 17](#)). Yahweh is a just God. The phrase, “*The days are coming...*,” ([v. 14](#)) signals the presence of God’s justice and mercy among them. It is the “just shoot” of the House of David from which will come Jesus, the Lord of Justice. Jeremiah predicted that God’s justice and peace during turmoil will come from the creation of a new safe Jerusalem in the person of Jesus, the Lord of Justice. He is the just and merciful presence of God. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: What does the word “justice” mean to you? What does the word “justice” mean in this first reading? Does our infidelity to the Word of God influences His justice?

SOMETHING ABOUT THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

The Book of Jeremiah is a major prophetic book of the Old Testament directed to the southern kingdom of Judah just before that nation fell to the Babylonians. The book is named for its author and central personality, the great prophet Jeremiah, who faithfully delivered God’s message of judgment in spite of fierce opposition from his countrymen.

Book of Jeremiah consists of twenty-three separate and independent sections, arranged in five books. I. The introduction, [ch. 1](#); II. Reproofs of the sins of the Jews, consisting of seven sections, (1.) [ch. 2](#); (2.) [ch. 3-6](#); (3.) [ch. 7-10](#); (4.) [ch. 11-13](#); (5.) [ch. 14:1-17:18](#); (6.) [ch. 17:19-ch. 20](#); (7.) [ch. 21-24](#). III. A general review of all nations, in two sections, (1.) [ch. 46-49](#); (2.) [ch. 25](#); with an historical appendix of three sections, (1.) [ch. 26](#); (2.) [ch. 27](#); (3.) [ch. 28; 29](#). IV. Two sections picturing the hopes of better times, (1.) [ch. 30; 31](#); (2.) [ch. 32; 33](#); to which is added an historical appendix in three sections, (1.) [ch. 34:1-7](#); (2.) [ch. 34:8-22](#); (3.) [ch. 35](#) and V. The conclusion, in two sections, (1.) [ch. 36](#); (2.) [ch. 45](#).

Reading II: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

LORD, WE WAIT FOR JUSTICE. Though St. Paul had been unjustly driven from Thessalonica by the Jews who opposed his preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he continued to preach through his letters to the new Christians. In these verses, he reminded them of the great gift of care and love for each other that he observed while he ministered to them. St. Paul also prayed that the Lord, not man, would cause the love of the believers to increase and overflow even more among themselves and toward all people. Their love was the source of justice in their community. The worship of the Lord of Justice, (first reading) would make their community a center of justice.

In this letter, St. Paul encouraged them to live in the just and merciful spirit of God by loving and serving others as they wait for the coming of Jesus Christ. They should be the face of God’s mercy and justice ([vv. 12-13](#)). Lord, we wait for your justice. DISCUSSION QUESTION: How can service and forgiveness of others reveal God’s justice.

Gospel: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

LORD, WE WAIT FOR JUSTICE. Global and domestic terrorist attacks, the threat of climate change, and the traumatic migration of people across national boundaries, may create the impression that the world will soon end. The scourge of racial intolerance and violence has risen over the past years. We may ask, where is the justice in these tragedies. In a 2017 meeting with Buddhist monks in Burma, Pope Francis stressed that true and lasting justice and peace cannot be achieved unless the dignity of all people is protected. "Authentic justice and lasting peace can only be achieved when they are guaranteed for all," Pope Francis said. As Christians, we know that during this turmoil and injustice we are called to live in a way that makes us more vigilant and more committed to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The more we are exposed to injustice, the more committed we must be to the cause of justice for all.

These verses from the Gospel of St. Luke attributed to Jesus could be viewed by some as a prophecy concerning the end of the world. St. Luke's Jesus channels the words of the great prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Joel, to describe God's judgment on His sinful people (Is. 13:9-10 and 34:4; Jer. 4:23-30; Joel 2:19). While Jesus' apocalyptic words in the Gospel of Luke can be taken symbolically, some earthly catastrophes may also precede the final judgment. Is the final judgment just?

The truth is that history is going somewhere. For the Christian, history has a goal and that goal is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord of all. He is the Lord our Justice. Those who do not have that Christ centered sense of history will die of fright in anticipation of what will happen to the world (v. 26). The appearance of the Son of Man descending in power and glory (Dan. 7:13) (Luke 21:27) will devastate those who do not know of God's mercy. But those who know that God is a just God, who is rich in mercy will stand erect, like the Israelites when they heard the call to leave their captivity in Egypt (Ex. 12:11). The Lord is our Justice, He is our deliverer from this world.

After this very stark description of events, St. Luke's Jesus encourages His listeners and us to live the teachings of the Gospel, as we await these events. Jesus warns us especially against drunkenness, anxiety and the preoccupations of this life (v. 34). Fear causes us to reject the Just God and seek safety in our senses, as a form of preservation. Just as St. Paul encourages the Thessalonians in the second reading to live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ, St. Luke charges us to seek a lifestyle that is centered on God's justice and mercy. If we are drunk with the cares and anxieties of this life, we cannot accept the justice of God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Is the final judgment of Luke considered "just"? Why?

PRAY ABOUT IT!

Monday

Find a way to welcome home someone who has been released from prison.

Tuesday

Read 1 Thes. 3:12 and 4:3-8. Are you following these instructions?

Wednesday

Donate clothing to the Juvenile detention center.

Thursday

Provide amenities to battered women shelters.

Friday

Visit someone who is ill, imprisoned or homebound.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church on the Works of Mercy

2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God:

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

Resources:

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/true-justice-and-peace-are-for-all-people-pope-tells-buddhist-leaders-17307>; Book of Jeremiah - Easton's Bible Dictionary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved. Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers. Luke- Jerome Kodell, O.S.B. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary, New Testament* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn. pp 974-975; The Sunday Readings Cycle C Kevin O'Sullivan, OF.M. Franciscan Press, Quincy University, Quincy Ill. pp. 1-5;

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Maria Goretti, Blessed Sacrament Joan of Arc St. Augustine and St. Peter Claver Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2018