

Sunday, November 30, 2025

First Sunday in Advent A

Matthew 21:1-11 "Come, walk in the Light of Christ."

Grace to you and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends,

First, I wished you a happy New Year in November.
Then, we read the Gospel Reading from Holy Week.
Has time come unravelled?
Are you somehow inside a British science-fiction broadcast?

Advent is a season that holds past, present, and future together in expectation.
However, time has not become completely wibbly-wobbly.
You are not about to have an adventure with a time-travelling alien.
But you have entered a new Church Year.

And this new Church Year begins by pointing us to the cross.
It begins with Jesus humbly coming to Jerusalem bearing the sins of the world.
The baby whose birth we're preparing to celebrate is the payment for our sins.
He is the King who comes to redeem His people through the cross.
Advent calls us to expect, repent, and hope in His coming.

Christ comes to us in humble mercy.

Therefore, we come to Him in faith.
And He teaches us to walk in His light until He comes again in glory.
As we wait for Him, Advent joins the Easter cry,
"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

1. Christ Humbly Comes to Us

My friends,

Christ humbly comes to us.

Advent does not begin with our movement towards God.
Advent begins with God's gracious movement towards us.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem *"humble and mounted on a donkey."*

He doesn't come bearing earthly power.
He comes bearing the burden of our sin.
He comes to make our peace with God.

*"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
 Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
 Behold, your King is coming to you;
 righteous and having salvation is He,
 humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."
 (Zechariah 9:9)*
 Jesus is the coming King foretold by the prophet Zechariah.

The people of Jerusalem ask, *"Who is this?"*
 And the crowds answer,
"This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." (Matthew 21:11)

Jesus indeed is the prophet.
 But Jesus is far more.

See how the psalmist David answers this question:

*"Lift up your heads, O gates!
 And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
 Who is this King of glory?
 The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!
 Lift up your heads, O gates!
 And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
 Who is this King of glory?
 The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!"*
 (Psalm 24:7–10)

Jesus is the LORD, the King of Glory.
 Jesus, Mighty in Battle, is the LORD of Armies.
 Jesus is the LORD, the great "I AM,
 the God of your fathers,
 the God of Abraham,
 the God of Isaac,
 and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:15)
 Jesus is God incarnate.
 And He comes humbly and gently.
 He comes to give righteousness and salvation to a people who do not understand.
 He comes to die for them.

St. Paul says,

*"None of the rulers of this age understood it,
for if they had,
they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

However, as it is written:

*'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived
what God has prepared for those who love Him'" (1 Corinthians 2:8–9)*

The King of glory comes to us in humility.

He is the one *"who is and who was and who is to come"* (Revelation 1:4).

He comes to give us righteousness and salvation.

Behold your King!

He is coming to you!

The *"day is at hand"*! (Romans 13:12)

Salvation draws near because Christ Himself draws near.

Jesus comes now by His Word and Sacraments.

His glory is still wrapped in humility.

He still comes to forgive, rescue, and bring peace.

Fix your eyes on the King who comes to you!

2. Therefore, We Come to Greet Him with Faith and Gladness

My friends,

Because He comes, we come.

We come together to greet Him with faith and gladness.

*"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob."* (Isaiah 2:3)

This is fulfilled when Christ's people gather in His house.

His people gather and say with the psalmist,

"I was glad when they said to me,

'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Psalm 122:1)

Today, you have joined the Palm Sunday crowd.

Not in nostalgia, nor in confusion, nor in misunderstanding.

No, the Church joins in **confession**.

We gather to confess:

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 21:9).

Jesus comes here to us in the name of our God to heal and forgive.

Christ comes to us in humble mercy.

Therefore, we come to Him in expectant faith.

We come to Him in repentance.

We come to Him in worship: *"Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the Highest!"*

We come knowing that He brings righteousness and salvation.

So, *"we bless [Him] from the house of the Lord"* (Psalm 118)

Advent calls us to awake from sleep. (Romans 13:11)

Advent calls us to lift up our heads. (Psalm 24:7)

Advent calls us to look and behold our King. (Matthew 21:5)

Advent calls us to open the gates of our hearts in repentance and faith.

So that the coming King may enter in.

We join together to greet Him, because here He has come to us.

Worship, repentance, and expectant faith are not our works.

They are the Spirit-formed responses to Christ's gracious Advent.

We come to Him in worship and faith because He first came to us.

He came to us in humility.

He came to us, lifting the burden of our guilt and shame.

He came to us, giving us His righteousness and salvation.

"We love because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19).

We come because He first came, and still comes, to us.

3. He Teaches Us to Walk in His Light Until He Comes Again

My friends,

Christ comes to us in humble mercy.

Therefore, we come to Him in faith.

And He teaches us to walk in His light until He comes again in glory.

Your King is coming to you.
 The night is ending.
 The day is almost at hand.
 So wake up!
 Live as children of the day.
 Stand up and be clothed in the armour of light.
 Put on the Lord Jesus Christ!

That is the Advent life of the baptized.
 Christ gathers His people to save them.
 By repentance, we cast off the works of darkness into the waters of baptism.
 By faith we put on the armour of light,
 rising to live in the newness of Christ's own righteousness.

Jesus gathers you together to teach you *"His ways"* so that you may *"walk in His paths."*
 (Isaiah 2:3).

Isaiah's ancient invitation is for you:
"Come, let us walk in the Light of the LORD." (Isaiah 2:5)
 What mercy and grace!
 That you and I, sinful people,
 are invited through baptism to *"walk in the Light of the LORD!"*
 This is only possible because Jesus came to you.
 Jesus came to you, having righteousness and salvation.

St. Paul applies this directly to Christian life in the Epistle Reading.
*"Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.
 Let us walk properly as in the daytime,
 not in orgies and drunkenness,
 not in sexual immorality and sensuality,
 not in quarreling and jealousy."* (Romans 13:12–13).

How is this done?
"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:14).
 It is accomplished by receiving Christ by the gift of faith.
 The arrival of Christ changes everything.
 Christ makes us new.
 By the Holy Spirit, working through the Word,
 Christ creates godly desires.
 Christ provides the divine love that drives those new desires into action.

The light that shines from the humble King forms humble lives.
 Christ's arrival creates lives of repentance.
 Christ's righteousness forms lives of peace, chastity, honesty, and love.
 He teaches us to walk in His light.

As we walk in His light, we wait for the final Advent.
 On that day, the swords will become plowshares. (Isaiah 2:4).
 Peace will be complete.
 For then Jesus shall come in glory, and darkness will be ended forever.

In anticipation of our King's glorious coming, we prepare.
 We prepare by daily repentance and renewed life.
 We cling to the forgiveness of sins and the hope of the life everlasting.
 We live by Christ's light, expecting His final coming.

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My friends,
*See! Your King is coming to you.
 Righteous and having salvation.
 Lift up your heads, O gates!
 And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
 that the King of glory may come in!*

Christ comes to us in humble mercy.
 Therefore, we respond by coming to Him in repentance and faith.
 We greet Him together with glad adoration.
 And He teaches us to walk in His light until He comes again in glory.
 As we wait for Him, Advent joins the Easter cry,
"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, amen.