

## First Sunday of Advent

Today is the first day of the new liturgical year and Holy Mother Church is quick to remind us that even though it is the beginning we must remember also our end. Thus in today's Gospel we have the reminder of the Last Judgment and Our Lord's second coming. The Church puts this before our eyes for another reason and that is to prepare us for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ incarnate at Christmas, thus the need to prepare the way of the Lord. This is shown to us from the Post-communion.

"May we receive Thy mercy in the midst of Thy temple, that we may prepare with due honour the coming feast of our redemption".

Advent is a time of expectation of the redeemer, so to be disposed for graces of his coming we must prepare well. The Fathers of the Church in their sermons on Advent stress the need to practice virtue and to extirpate or failings. To do this we need to make some sacrifices, that is why in the early Church Xmas was preceded by around 40 days of fast, beginning on the feast of St. Martin. It was called St. Martin's lent. Today the Church has mitigated the fast but still desires that we do make some sacrifices. She reminds us with the Violet vestments and the suppression of the Gloria.

On the other hand the world sings "Gloria in excelsis Deo... and Joy to the world the savior is born." they have all their decorations up the day after thanksgiving. For them Xmas has begun and will end the day after Xmas. St. Paul warns us against this spirit in his Epistle today,

*"Brethren, knowing that the now the hour for us to rise from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed And the day is at hand. Let us, therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ: and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences. "*

The world wants Christ, yes, but on their terms, they want the redeemer, not dying on the cross, not as judge on the last day, but as a cute and cuddly baby in a manger.

Let us strive my dear faithful to share in Our Lord's sufferings by fighting our defects and growing in virtue by His example, so that we can have a true gift to lay at his feet on Xmas day.

As is said in today's secret

"May these holy Mysteries, O Lord, cleanse us by their virtue and make us come with greater purity to Him who is their source. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son who livest and reigneth in unity with the Holy Ghost world without end. Amen."