

## **CHRISTMAS CAN WAIT**

**I think this might be a good slogan for the 4 weeks of Advent**

**This is a short season of preparation**

**Getting ready**

**We should be good at waiting by now**

**But it seems that in many ways we have grown impatient**

**We don't want to wait for Christmas**

**It used to be after Thanksgiving before lights and trees went up**

**The shopping could wait until normal business hours on Friday**

**But now it is not enough to be opened at 4 or 5 in the morning**

**Many places think they have to be opened on Thanksgiving Day**

**Sales begin as early as Halloween**

**Our fathers in faith can teach us still something about waiting**

**The first Advent was thousands of years in preparation**

**They weren't waiting for a God to be born as a child**

**They were waiting for the stump of Jesse**

**The Son of David**

**They were waiting for the promises God made to Abraham to be fulfilled**

**These promises were fulfilled partially in the incarnation**

**When God became man**

**But these promises remain to be fulfilled in their entirety  
At the second coming of Jesus Christ  
And that is the focus at the beginning of our Advent season  
Christmas can wait  
We need to learn how to prepare  
Like the Jews in our first reading  
We get to read of these events in hindsight  
We know what was happening  
And how so much played out over the centuries  
But not so for those living at the time  
They were living through the trials and tribulations  
Their land had been split  
The north and the south  
Jeremiah was a prophet from the south  
But he was sent to the north  
His prophesy was not for a splinter group  
It was for the entire Israelite nation  
It is for all people today  
Despite the current situation  
They are not forgotten by God  
A shoot of Jesse will arise**

**In the spring, after a long winter**

**What is the first sign of life?**

**A shoot springs from a plant that looks dead**

**This is God's promise**

**Although the kingdom of David may look dead**

**To those living at the time, it seems to be destroyed**

**There will come forth a shoot**

**A sign of life**

**And this shoot will rule for all time**

**This promise of a future event is what we have in our Gospel as well**

**Yes, each Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Christ**

**It is a celebration of a past event**

**It is a celebration of a current event**

**Christ's presence and reigning in our hearts**

**It is a promise of a future event**

**His second coming**

**We do not want to concentrate only on one**

**And forget the others**

**So we read of this future event in our Gospel**

**There will be signs in the sky**

**People will die of fright**

**The powers of the heavens will be shaken**

**Nothing about rapture here**

**Faithful Christians will not be spared**

**Christ does not promise to snatch them away**

**Just as Mary and Joseph were not spared from any suffering**

**Jesus himself was not spared any suffering**

**We cannot expect anything different when the end comes**

**This is what it would be to have hearts drowsy from carousing  
and drunkenness**

**Letting the anxieties of daily life distract us**

**Be vigilant and pray you may be able to stand before the Son of Man**

**If we think we will be spared**

**Why bother preparing?**

**If we are not prepared**

**We will buckle under the pressure when it comes**

**This preparedness should not be a cause of despair**

**Like a young couple expecting their first child**

**Going to Lamaze class**

**Learning about the risks**

**The potential for a caesarian birth**

**These do not lessen the expectation or joy in their lives**

**They know there will be a day of rejoicing**

**And they are prepared**

**The term Advent is Latin for coming**

**So we have these 4 short weeks to prepare for Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> coming**

**This will be a new birth**

**And like all births, there is a radical change**

**Like the young couple**

**A new birth involves labor and pain**

**It is a time of trial and a sort of crisis**

**If this is true for each human birth**

**What will it be for a cosmic birth?**

**When a new heaven and new earth will be created**

**There are temptations to avoid the time of preparation**

**To become distracted with things**

**Parties, shopping, decorations, travel**

**All these are good things**

**But are they the meaning of the season?**

**Do they take on the highest importance?**

**It is easy for any of us to take the short view in the world**

**Making Christmas about these external things**

**Forgetting about Advent**

**It is easy to take the short view in the Church**

**There are those that claim Vatican II was the end of the Catholic Church**

**I know of priests that thought John Paul was the end of the Church  
I know some priests that have left the priesthood because of Pope Francis**

**We can get so caught up in keeping Christ in Christmas  
Or fighting for the right to say Merry Christmas and not Happy Holidays**

**All good and noble things for sure  
But even these can prevent us from preparing**

**Advent is a gift**

**It is a time of preparing from a distance**

**Looking forward to great mysteries**

**Considering where we are in our lives in our relationship with God**

**Reviewing our lives**

**Taking a sober look at them**

**Am I on the right path?**

**Do I need to alter course?**

**Advent is a time of renewal**

**How was my past year?**

**How was my past ten years?**

**This is a time of fresh beginnings**

**But we cannot do it alone**

**We cooperate with the grace God offers during Advent**

**The world is not as it was even 20 or 30 years ago**

**And it will continue to change**

**We need to find that which does not change**

**Christ**

**The same yesterday, today, forever**

**Advent is a time to be on the watch**

**Looking inward**

**To see where we have surrendered**

**To see where God is inviting to**

**This is the time to prepare**

**Christmas can wait**