

DECEMBER 3, 2017



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



ISAIAH 63:16B–17, 19B; 64:2–7

PSALM 80:2–3, 15–16, 18–19

1 CORINTHIANS 1:3–9

MARK 13:33–37

REFLECTION

Advent is a time of quiet, stillness, preparation, and joyful anticipation. Not only do we anticipate the coming celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas but we also prepare and look forward to Christ's return at the end of days. When considering that dual purpose of Advent, the readings about waiting and preparing for the Lord take on a whole new meaning. Advent is also the beginning of the liturgical year. In our society, it is common for people to make New Year's resolutions—they promise themselves that they are going to make a positive change in their lives. Advent also allows the opportunity for us to think about our lives and find ways we can improve. Jesus tells us in the Gospel this week: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come!" (v. 33). He warns us of being unprepared to receive Christ's return. Imagine that one of your teachers announces that you will be given a comprehensive test on a random day during the term. Every day when you walk into class, you know there is a chance you will be tested on everything you've learned in the class so far. How would you prepare for that? Jesus is teaching the same thing. It is easy for us to think that we can start improving ourselves tomorrow. But as the proverb says, "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now." Every day that we wait to do something is a day we can't get back. While it might seem like there is always more time to accomplish something, the best time to act is now. What change do you want to make in your life, starting right now?

ACTION

Consider this beginning of Advent as your New Year, and think of a New Year's resolution that you want to make—some way in which you want to live your life just a bit better. Maybe you want to become more attentive to the needs of people in your lives, or maybe you want to try doing one extra act of kindness for someone each day. By making your New Year's resolution now, you can have something extra to focus on during this Advent season. Making an "Advent resolution" might also be easier in this quiet season of contemplation than the hustle and bustle of the New Year.



JOURNALING QUESTIONS



- What one thing would you like to change the most about how you live your life, and why? What do you think of as "attentiveness" in daily life? Do you believe that you are attentive? Why or why not?