

Homily. 1st Sunday of Advent. Year.B. 28/29 November 2020.

During this last year there have been more than a few times when I've asked myself what sort of an Advent we'd end up having in 2020. Little wonder really, what with Lent cut off at the knees before the 4th Sunday and having Easter and Easter Time right up past Pentecost cancelled on us due to Covid 19. Yet, here we are today, still in a middle of a global pandemic, able to gather for Advent with a seating capacity nearing our old numbers. Of course, I wait for some more of our members to return to our community just as you do. However, to be honest, there's little more any of us can do about this other than get the doors open and welcoming and keep inviting our family of faith to come back home and be with us.

There's been a lot of waiting for all of us this year; waiting to see what would happen with Covid, waiting through the lock down phase, waiting for the next tranche of rules and regulations to land on the desk and waiting for each stage of our Church re-opening process. Others have had to wait to be reunited with wives, husbands and family from their quarantine both here in Australia and overseas, some have had to wait to see Doctors and others again have waited in dealing with dying and death in the middle of this pandemic. When you think about it, and we've all had plenty of time to think this year, much of living is about waiting; for birth and for death, for a phone call or a visit, for good news to come our way, for a change of fortune, a breakthrough, a longed for reunion, and finally waiting for an end to our difficulties and struggles.

This is what Advent is all about. It's a season of waiting, but with a purpose and a sure hope that our waiting isn't in vain. These short 4

weeks ask us to focus on the coming of the Lord, in history 2000 years ago certainly, but even more relevant to us His coming amongst us now and His final coming and victory at the end of life and time itself. Our waiting isn't at all passive, a sitting around ruminating over what might be. No, ours is a directed waiting and preparing for what most certainly will be; Christmas this year, God willing, but more, much more besides.

Advent, if we make it happen for ourselves, is about getting ready to see and hear and greet the Lord today and every day of our lives as He comes to us in Word and Sacrament, in other people and in the joyful and sorrowful everyday events of our lives. This is why Jesus orders us to stay awake and keep alert lest we miss His presence and action in the here and now.

The 1st reading speaks to us about how much we long for His appearing, almost willing the heavens to be torn open that He might come. We know though that He has already come and is with us here today if only we will recognise Him. In conclusion then, during these hopeful Advent weeks do something as you wait. Do the things Jesus asks of us so that He may find us joyfully running to greet Him at His coming with our minds focused on the things of heaven and our hearts fixed on the gifts that endure forever.