

1st Sunday of Advent (A)
November 30, 2025
“Remember, Look, Live”

Advent is a confusing season. The Lord has come, and yet we prepare for his coming. He is risen, and yet we prepare a crib for him. We rejoice that he lives in us, and yet we live as we always have, often without reflection and repentance.

Advent expresses in ritual, symbol, and celebration three stages on the journey of life: (a) Christ has come, (b) Christ will come again, and (b) Christ is here now. A special program can help us navigate anointed Advent: let us remember with Isaiah, look ahead with Jesus, and live with Paul.

First, Advent is about **remembering**. We recapture in symbol what God’s people, Israel, lived for the centuries. Isaiah presents the image of “*the mountain of the Lord’s house,*” “*established as the highest mountain and raised above the hills*” (2:2). That mountain is Mount Zion, Jerusalem, the place where God’s people received instruction and peace.

When I think of mountains, the Rocky Mountains, the Himalayan Mountains, Mount Everest, or the Swiss Alps come to mind. Mountains are rock formations pointing up to heaven, leading us to our final home. Isaiah was a major prophet who presented a glorious vision to encourage a people who lived in the darkness and doom of exile. He pointed to the One who called himself, “*the light of the world,*” Jesus Christ, whose light still shone brightly on Calvary and rose at Easter dawn for our redemption.

Our liturgy remembers decades of darkness, lifted by a light unparalleled in history. We remember God’s family groping in the gloom of ignorance and sin. We remember the day Jesus came to shatter that gloom with his powerful light.

You can’t effectively go into the future by forgetting the past. Isaiah reminds us of what the world was like before Christ came to transform it.

Advent not only looks back, but it **looks** ahead. This is where Matthew enters. Recounting the days of Noah, when people were too busy “*eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*” to recognize that their world was about to end, Jesus reminds his listeners that the Son of Man will come on an unexpected day and time. Notice the balance of nature: *Two men* in the field: one taken and one left, and *two women* at the mill: one taken and one left. The Lord is coming like a thief at night, but only God the Father knows when and how.

That means we need to be alert, attentive, and active in good works. In Advent, this includes reflecting on our souls, sensitizing our consciences, making a good Confession, donating to local food pantries, and offering special prayers for special needs.

Finally, Saint Paul calls us to **live**. As we look to the past and look to the future, we live in the present. Christ is here, living in the poor and needy people of our day.

Saint Paul provides a short list of proper Advent actions: throw off works of darkness like swearing and stealing; put on the armor of light by invoking the Holy Spirit; reject “*orgies and drunkenness, promiscuity and lust, rivalry and jealousy*” (Rom. 13:13).

We will all be judged by our actions, and Advent is a new season to develop new habits through new actions. An Advent Examination of Conscience can help us. Consider these questions as you begin your first week of Anointed Advent '25:

- 1) What precisely are the areas of darkness in my life?
- 2) Does Christ shine forth from my daily life? If not, why not?
- 3) Is there something that I am clinging to, desperate to keep in my possession?
- 4) What is preventing me from climbing the Lord's mountain this year?

There you have it: Isaiah calling us to **remember** our former condition, Jesus urging us to **look** ahead to his Second Coming, and Paul teaching us how to **live** in the present.

May these actions make our Advent fruitful and full of blessed hope. God bless you.