

First Sunday of Advent 2018

My beloved brothers and sisters, one of the things I most loathe, is to be put on hold waiting to be connected on a Customer Service Line. It is not Customer Service, it is a Customer disservice and deliberate frustration line. Today, we are celebrating the First Sunday of Advent. Many Catholics have the wrong idea that this period of time is a time of waiting for Christmas to arrive, wherein they have to do the once or twice a year dreaded confession at a Penance Service. However, this is not how the Church receives this time. It is a time of getting ready, of getting prepared, not just to greet Christmas; but, a time to get ourselves ready to greet the Lord whether it is at the end of time, when He returns to bring history to its fulfillment, to judge the living and the dead, and to put a definitive end to evil; or at the end of our lives.

From this point of view, the whole of human history is not just a waiting period with undisclosed numbers of centuries, waiting for the second coming; rather, throughout Salvation History, the prophets and the Gospels have called us to get our lives in order to be prepared to greet the Lord with great joy. During the season of Advent, we anticipate the Feast of the Incarnation, the final stage of our Human Salvation with the birth of Christ; and we prepare for this celebration with diligence, including examining our lives, to make sure our hearts and lives are prepared to greet the King. We are preparing our souls to receive the wonderful and extraordinary graces that God wants to give us by examining our consciences and returning to radical dependency upon our God, turning away from selfishness, self-centeredness, our bad habits and sinful tendencies in our lives, working to get rid of these things which hinder our progress in holiness. We listen, once again to John the Baptist's cry: Repent! Turn away from sin, turn to God, make ready the way of the Lord!

So- were not waiting around for something to happen- it has already happened, God has come in the flesh. Jesus has initiated our Salvation, we are being called to live out our lives in hope, cooperating with the Grace He gives us to be the Holy men and women He has created us to be. We are called this year, like every year, to get ready for the celebration of our Salvation in the Birth of Christ, by giving

ourselves over to His mercy and forgiveness in the Sacraments, by prayer, by renewing charity, by getting serious about our spiritual lives, by living our Catholic Faith, by turning away from sin and selfishness, and turning back to God with our whole heart, mind and soul. Jesus says to us today: What are you waiting for?