

COMMENTARY
1st Sunday of Advent: Year C

Resources Used:

- Wansbrough, H. (2012). *The Sunday Word: A Commentary on the Sunday Readings*. London; New York: Burns & Oates.
- Bishop Barron Homily.
- Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Light of the Word*.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14–16

¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

This prophecy comes at the darkest moment of Israel’s history, when the storm clouds of invasion were gathering, and the Babylonian conquest and exile seemed inevitable (Henry Wansbrough).

The “righteous Branch to spring up for David” is the fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy, that a son of David would reign forever. The ancient insight in this is to never put your ultimate faith in any of the political or social arrangements of this world. They are all attractive but they are all accompanied by shadows & destined to fall. What you should look to is the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven — the establishment of God’s Kingdom with God’s Power. That is the *adventus*, the arrival we should wait for (cf. Bishop Barron Homily).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 25:4–5, 8–10, 14

R. To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**⁴Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.**

**⁵Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.**

**⁸Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

**⁹He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.**

**¹⁰All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.**

**¹⁴The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:12–4:2

¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

4 Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. ² For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

Paul gives instructions about living in holiness while waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Christian living, in accord with the Church’s “admonitions” (second reading), is thus a life lived in expecting the coming Lord. It is a life that takes its norm from the future. Priority is given to the commandment of love... Second, a “strengthened heart”... Only strength from God will help us keep our love of neighbor Christian rather than letting it drift off into a vague humanitarianism” (Balthasar, *LW*, 258).

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**⁷Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.**

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25–28, 34–36

²⁵ “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

³⁴ “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

“In the Gospel the Church year begins by looking forward – toward Christ’s return. In the process the Gospel teaches us something unusual – to view Christmas (Christ’s first coming) and the world’s judgment (his second coming) together. This should not surprise us, for the Scriptures say again and again that the end times begin with Christ’s Incarnation: God says his final Word (Heb

1:2), all that remains is to wait to see if men listen to it or refuse to listen to it... What we view as a huge space between Christmas and the Last Judgment is nothing but the time granted us to make up our minds. Many will say Yes, but it looks like the No's are on the increase during the allotted period... Christmas is no festival of niceness, rather it celebrates the powerlessness of God's love, which can overpower only by means of death. During the time of our testing the word for us is, "Watch and pray." (Balthasar, *LW*, 257-8).

"They watch for Christ who are sensitive, eager, apprehensive in mind, who are awake, alive, quick-sighted, zealous in honoring him, who look for him in all that happens, and who would not be surprised, who would not be over-agitated or overwhelmed, if they found that he was coming at once... This then is to watch: to be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen; to live in the thought of Christ as he came once, and as he will come again; to desire his second coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of his first" (Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman).