

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISHES OF

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Advent 2021

*Advent is an incessant call to hope.  
It reminds us that God is present in history to lead to its ultimate end, to lead to its  
fullness, which is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

-Pope Francis

The Church always begins Advent—the new year in the Church’s calendar—with the Scriptural passages of the Final Judgment, the Second Coming. It is a terrifying scene in some ways. All those trumpets and clouds and glory to herald in the definitive moment of our destiny, for good or for ill. It seems a funny way to start the year. But it is also a vision of hope, described in a very human way to evoke our reaction, to catapult us to decide one way or the other: “He that is not with me, is against me” (Mt 12:30).



And yet, beginning with the Last Judgment makes sense, too. If we are to know which way we are to run, we need to know our goal. The scenes of the Second Coming make the goal clear.

It is the hope of attaining that goal that spurs us on.

When we attain a goal, then we *possess* what we have hoped for, and we no longer have hope, but possess what we strive for. In this life, then, if hope is the fuel that drives us forward, faith is the engine that burns from hope.

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*Now faith is the substance of things to be hoped for,  
the evidence of things that appear not. (Heb 11:1)*

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So Advent is preeminently a time of hope and a time of faith. A time of waiting and a time of preparation. A time to work—to travail—and a time to persevere.

We know, however, that the attainment of our goal—everlasting life—is something that is beyond our limited and finite power. And we know that we get side-tracked and take detours in the path towards our goal. We sit down by the roadside when we are tired. We doze off. We stumble and sometimes we fall. Night falls, and the way becomes obscure.

*Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (Jn 14:6).*

It is the height of the expected that our help should come—at the *first* coming of Jesus—with his birth as an infant.

And yet what embodies hope more than a child?

Everything is yet to be done, everything is yet possible, the path forward is full of potential.

But such a child as this, no one has seen, for He is the eternally-begotten-of-the-Father, come now close to us, among us. *Emmanuel*: God with us!

Our hope no longer rests on our own power, but on the power of this child who will become our brother in the order of grace and mercy and love. Who not only shows us the way, but *is* the way in our darkness, *is* the light of truth, *is* life eternal. To “possess” Jesus—to be united to Him—is to attain our hope.

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

*For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth,  
visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;  
all things have been created through him and for him.*

*He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Col 1:15-17)*

May this Advent be for you a time of waiting, a time of preparation and a time of hope!



Father Philip Creurer

*Pastor*