

1st Sunday of Advent

Coming to the end of the Church's year we have been scared to death with talk about the end of the world and all the terrible things that will happen. OK, dear Mother Church, you have our attention. Suddenly, we enter a new cycle. The great ship is steered away from death and destruction and we face to the East one more time. John Wayne's quote comes to mind: "Tomorrow is the most important thing in life. Comes into us at midnight very clean. It's perfect when it arrives and it puts itself into our hands. It hopes we've learned something from yesterday." What have I learned? Maybe I should pay attention more. Maybe I should look at the signs of the times. Maybe I should have some serious thoughts about my life. Where am I going? It is hard to focus when we are so scared. Where do I turn to for my hope, for my salvation? The ancient prophecy rises again. "A shoot springs from the stump of Jesse." From this dead lifeless thing new life rises. All is not lost. Even at the worst there is always hope. We must believe that or we will die. Look at the people who don't have hope in their lives. There seems to be little point in living. It is much easier to give up. When Moses holds up a serpent on a stick we hold up the Lord Jesus crucified on a cross. We do that because we want to tell the world something. This is the great leap of faith. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God came down from Heaven and He walked upon the earth. His heart broke at what he saw. He saw sinful humanity and how our lives have become a celebration of our sinfulness. Paul in his Letter to the Romans pronounced: "Sin entered the world." We were doing fine. We were happy and contented and then sin entered the world and we have been suffering ever since. Because of sin every day we experienced a thousand deaths. We suffer the barbs and arrows and we wonder will it ever stop. Time to do something about it in the great Divine Court Case. Jesus steps up and he says if there is a sentence to be paid that will give relief to suffering humanity He will pay that price. We loved Him for that. We also loved killing Him. We love killing everything. At some time it is time to stop and press the reset button. Advent has come. We will hear the announcement of the coming of the Messiah very soon. This is a time to get ready. Of course, I am probably wasting my time because we are going to spend our day putting up lights so that we can be dazzled by pretty things. Even now, when we are given another chance to pay attention we prefer to spend our time concerned about passing things. At some point there is no more time. You had all your chances and you blew every one of them. Now is the appointed time. Now is the day of salvation, so let's go.

With love, Fr. Pat.