

LOOKING TO SUNDAY®

Sunday, December 3, 2017

The First Sunday of Advent

TOLD ONCE MORE

All of us have favorite stories – stories that we enjoy again and again.

For example, people whose attention and imagination were captured by the series of adventures found in Star Wars, Harry Potter, or Lord of the Rings continually return to those stories. Even though their endings are known, those stories continue to appeal to audiences. They work their magic.

Certainly, the month of December has its special stories, ones we look forward to each year. Could it be Christmas without watching a version of Charles Dicken’s *A Christmas Carol* or seeing *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (first broadcast in 1965)?

The Church has its own favorite story that it shares with us again and again. The Church tells that story as the scripture readings are proclaimed during the course of each liturgical year, as it will during the new liturgical year of 2018 that begins this Sunday.

As the liturgical seasons unfold we hear the story that has changed lives, transformed hearts and minds, and nourished the faith of billions of Christians for 2,000 years.

In the Gospel for this First Sunday of Advent (Mark 13:33-37), Jesus tells us three times to “Watch!” He tells us to “Be alert!”

While those words refer to our being ready for his coming in glory, they can also remind us to watch and be attentive to the story of salvation that begins again this Sunday and continues through November 25, 2018, the final Sunday of this new liturgical year.

During the Advent season, we will hear how all was readied for the coming of the Messiah.

During the Christmas Season we will learn how the Son of God came among us in flesh and blood. Born of a woman, revealed to Jewish shepherds and Gentile kings, raised in a human family, he walked among us.

During the season of Lent, the story challenges us to examine our lives and actions in light of the teachings and example of Jesus. As we do, we become aware of our sins and failings and equally aware of the Lord’s mercy.

During the Easter season, we celebrate the highpoint of the story - the victory of Jesus over sin, darkness, and death. We learn that we who are baptized into a relationship with Christ also share that victory. We learn that our personal story does not end with our final breath.

During the season of Ordinary Time, as we hear the preaching of Jesus and watch his actions, we are challenged to grow in our understanding of our faith and even more importantly in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

As we listen once more to the Church’s favorite story during this coming liturgical year, we need to watch and to be alert. For what the Lord is saying in that story, he is saying to us. What the Lord is doing in that story, he is doing for us.

No matter how many times we may have heard the Gospel story, it is never the same. Our ever-changing concerns and moods, our ever-changing questions and experiences, all affect how the story touches our hearts.

This Sunday, the First Sunday of Advent, we begin the treasured story of God coming to his people – the only story that will be continually told until the end of time.

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