



a Kendall Hunt Company

First Sunday of Advent, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session, read all the readings:

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalms 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word in Liturgy

Each new liturgical year begins, on the first Sunday of Advent, not with looking back to our origins but with looking forward to our future. The liturgy invites us today to become a church of expectancy and hope, because we live in the light of a particular future. The coming of the Lord at the end of time is the theme of the First Sunday of Advent.

The gospel of Year C (Luke) describes the second coming of Christ, the Son of Man, in cosmic terms. Luke's gospel portrays a cosmos wracked with upheaval. The sun, moon and stars, the powers of the heavens, and the roaring sea will conspire to terrify whole nations and make individuals die of fright. Yet, at the same time, this passage breathes assurance that believers will not only endure these and any other disasters, but in the very midst of them will find their salvation revealed. The bold confidence proclaimed in Luke's gospel ("When these things begin to happen, stand up straight and raise your heads...") is distinctive.

In the midst of disaster, where does this confidence come from? The first reading, from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, offers an important insight into this question, by drawing our attention to God's promise. As the prophet who spoke God's word of judgment in the midst of the complete destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was no stranger to disaster. Yet his prophetic work also included some oracles of hope, of which the present reading is one. In it he tells of God's promise to raise up a "just shoot" to reign in the line of David, and of a time when the Lord God will rule over a Jerusalem fully restored and made whole.

In reading this oracle of Jeremiah, Christians have understood that the promise of a "just shoot" found its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth, a descendant of the family of King David, who



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was sent to inaugurate the reign of God and is the very embodiment of God's justice. Thus in the context of today's liturgy, Jeremiah's words lead us to recall the first coming of Christ as the fulfillment of God's promise. At the same time, the Church believes that the full consummation of the future promised by God has not yet come about. We must rely on God's promise.

Catholic Doctrine

"He will come again in glory."

This formulation from our Profession of Faith (the Nicene Creed) provides a doctrinal focus for the scriptures from the liturgy of the First Sunday of Advent. The kingdom of God is, as one theologian wrote, "already...not yet." In Jesus, the world has experienced the inauguration of the kingdom of God among us, although we believe that the fullness of that kingdom is something not yet experienced. We look forward to its final fulfillment at the end of time, when Christ comes again in glory.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church examines the doctrine of Christ's return in several places and stresses several key points. Catholics do not believe that the fulfillment of the destiny of creation and human beings will be brought about by material progress or human activity alone (secularism), but by God. Catholics reject any attempts to predict the end of the world (millenarianism) or to lessen in any way our responsibility for stewardship of this present world based on a future second coming of Christ. Catholics believe that we meet the glorified Lord upon the event of our death, as well as when his fully glory is revealed to all the world at the end of time.