

FATHER SCHULTE HOMILY
November 30, 2020
First Sunday of Advent

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. It marks the beginning of a new liturgical year in the Church. Last Sunday was the Feast of Christ the King and it marked the end of the previous liturgical year. These two Sundays form a type of hinge between the seasons.

In Advent, we celebrate the Lord's First Coming, whereas the Feast of Christ the King anticipates the Lord's 2nd Coming. These are the two comings of Jesus Christ that most Christians are familiar with and talk about. However, St. Bernard reminds us that Jesus comes to us as a third time, or a middle coming.

In His 1st Coming:

- He came in human flesh and all of its weaknesses. He was visible (child to Man).
- And he comes as our Redeemer.

In His 2nd, Future Coming:

- He comes in his Glory, and also visible.
- He comes as our life and our Judge.

In his Middle Coming:

- He is invisible, hidden.
- He comes in spirit and power.
- Only the elect can see him through the eyes of faith.
- In this Middle Coming he comes as our consolation to console us in our trials.
- It is like a road that we travel that connects his first coming with His final coming.

How do we know this Middle Coming is real?

- In John 14:23 Jesus said;
 - “If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will come to him, and make our home with them.”
- In Psalm 119:11 we read:
 - “I have hidden your “words” in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.”
 - Jesus is the word of God who lives in our heart.

- In Rev. 3:20:
 - “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come to him, and eat with him, and he with me.”
- In a completely unique and mysterious way: Jesus comes to us in the consecrated bread and wine and he feeds us and dwells in our hearts.
- In 1st Corinthians 15:49 Paul said,
 - “As we bore the likeness of the earthly man (Adam) we shall also bear the likeness of the heavenly man (Jesus Christ).”

The more Christ comes to us and lives in us the more we become like Him.

And so we see, Brothers and Sisters, St. Bernard shows us that this 3rd or middle coming is very real, one we often take for granted, as we focus on the 1st and 2nd comings.

- His Birth and 1st Coming may seem to us in the distant past – something we did not personally experience.
- While his 2nd coming appears to be in the far distant future, something we look forward to but still have not experienced.
- But his middle coming we experience in the now moment. If we only open the door and invite Him in.
- Only the believer experiences this very real middle coming of Christ. We experience Him by faith.

And so we celebrate his first coming during Advent and Christmas; and anticipate his 2nd coming at the end of the age, we realize that Jesus is with and in each of us this very moment.

Remember: Advent is a 4-week period of spiritual preparation for the celebration of Christmas.

- Using the sacrament of confession is a very important part of this preparation.
- You might even have an Advent wreath on your kitchen table, or somewhere prominent in your home.