

The First Sunday of Advent

■ The 62nd Sharing of the Word

● First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

God declares that the days are coming when His promise to restore Israel and Judah will be fulfilled. He assures that this word will be faithfully kept and brought to fruition. From the lineage of David, a righteous Branch (the Messiah) will arise. The Messiah (Savior Jesus) will bring stability to the people of Israel, establishing God's perfect rule and spiritual righteousness. As a result of God's salvation and governance, Judah (the unified kingdom) and Jerusalem (the capital) will enjoy peace. Since "The Lord is our righteousness," God demonstrates to humanity the standard of righteousness through His works. Even though people cannot fully uphold this standard and may violate it through sin, they are forgiven and made righteous by God's love and grace. Reconciliation between God and humanity is achieved not through human effort or deeds but through God's acceptance. This reconciliation brings peace and hope for rest.

【Israel and Judah】

After King Solomon's death, the Kingdom of Israel split into two: the northern kingdom, called "Israel," and the southern kingdom, "Judah." Israel fell to Assyria in 722 B.C., and Judah was later destroyed by Babylon. Jeremiah, through God's message, foretold the reunification of these two peoples into one nation (later called Judah and then Israel). After the Babylonian exile and the return of the people of Judah, the distinction between Israel and Judah blurred, and the entire Jewish people came to be recognized as "the people of Israel."

【The Role of the Messiah (Jesus)】

1. Witnessing the Truth about God

- (1) God's salvation plan (John 3:16) sent Jesus for atonement, enabling the forgiveness of sins and granting eternal life (John 14:6).
- (2) Jesus proclaimed the arrival of God's Kingdom and urged repentance (Matthew 4:17).
- (3) At the end of the world, the final judgment will grant eternal life to the righteous and bring condemnation to the wicked (John 5:28-29).

2. Through Jesus' atonement, the door to eternal life opens, ushering in a new era that fundamentally transforms humanity's future.

● Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

Paul exhorts the Thessalonian believers to show unconditional love not only toward one another but also toward non-believers, following the example of Jesus. Such love is essential for the maturity of their faith. He encourages believers to practice love in their daily lives by caring for and helping others. Paul reminds them to be mindful of the Lord's return, resist the temptations of this world, and strive to live blamelessly before God. While the believers are already living according to the teachings they have received, Paul urges them to deepen their love further. There is no end to growing in faith, and daily acts of love are necessary. Jesus' "commandment" is to practice love that pleases God, manifesting it through their daily actions.

● Gospel Reading: Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Signs will appear in the sun, moon, and stars, and the seas will rage. As the world approaches its end, extraordinary cosmic and earthly phenomena will signify that the end of all creation is near. The "shaking of the heavens" implies a transformation of the entire universe and the manifestation of God's power. While the specifics of what will happen remain unclear, fear and anxiety will overwhelm people. For believers, however, this period marks the awaited return of Christ, who will come on the clouds. For the unbelieving, it brings personal judgment (Revelation 20:12-15), a source of great fear.

Believers are encouraged not to fear when these extraordinary events occur but to recognize that the hope of salvation

is near. They must remain prepared and vigilant for the end, as no one can predict when it will come. In their daily lives, they must avoid being distracted by worries, hardships, or pleasures that lead them away from the Lord's teachings. By maintaining prayer and vigilance, believers can stand unashamed before Jesus when He comes.

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