

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A) 5th DECEMBER 2010.

In this season of Advent the Church encourages us to think of the coming of God into our world in the person of Our Lord Jesus.

Last Sunday we were reminded of his coming again in the future. Today and in the remaining Sundays before Christmas we are invited to think about his first coming into the world in his Nativity, and also about the way in which he still comes to us.

Jesus' coming into our world is a past, a present and a future reality. Let's use today's readings to see how God comes to us now.

He comes to us through the preaching of his chosen ministers like John the Baptist in the Gospel for today.

Jesus also comes to us through the scriptures, our Bible.

In the second reading St. Paul says: "Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something."

Every Scripture reading at Mass is meant to teach us something about God.

The reader ends by reminding us that he/she has just read "the Word of the Lord".

This is so important that the Church calls this Second Sunday of Advent "Bible Sunday" and calls us to be open to the word of God.

The challenge this Sunday is to reconsider how we can be more open.

Four things are essential.

1. We must listen to every word.
Think how many people you see in the street with their eyes and ears fixed on their mobile phones, intently looking and listening to the words of their friends.
The Word of the Lord demands even more attention.
2. We must respond to the Word of the Lord.
People do not ignore their mobile phones. They usually answer them at once.
As Christians we must respond in the same way.
3. We must prepare to hear the Word of the Lord.
We are given only extracts at Mass.
They make more sense if they are read in context of what comes before and after.

It is helpful to read some explanation in *Bible Alive* or some other commentary.

4. We must pray the scriptures.

When we hear the Word of the Lord, God is speaking to us.

The Word of the Lord is one side of God's conversation with us.

Our prayer is the other side.

There have to be two sides to a conversation.

Lectio Divina is a traditional way of praying the scriptures.

We do this once a month at prayer group on a Thursday evening.

Some people wonder why we read the Old Testament at Mass.

Our Advent readings provide the answer.

Jesus in the New Testament fulfils and completes the promises that God made to his people in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament helps us to understand the New Testament.

St. Paul quotes our first reading just after the ending of our second reading.

John the Baptist is quoting Isaiah when he calls himself a voice crying in the wilderness.

In the coming year we shall hear the Gospel of Matthew at most Sunday Masses.

Listen out for the many times when Matthew says that Jesus fulfilled the words spoken by the Lord through the prophets.

Today's Old Testament reading from Isaiah tells us a lot about Jesus.

It tells us the qualities that Jesus embodied and expects us to embody

- Wisdom and insight
- Counsel and power
- Knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

These are the gifts of the Spirit which we receive at Confirmation.

They come from Isaiah in the Old Testament

So let's pray that we may do everything possible to recognise and respond to our Lord Jesus when he comes to us in his Word in Holy Scripture.

Rev Geoff Carey