

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
First Sunday of Advent • Year B • November 29, 2020



*O Lord,
look down
from Heaven
and protect the
people you have
made your own.
Through your
Son, Jesus
Christ,
keep us firm in faith
as we hasten toward
your kingdom.
Find us ready,
Lord God, at your
coming in power, might,
mercy, and love. Amen.*

Sunday Word

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

Psalms 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:33-37

Be Mindful!

The people have lost sight of God and his ways. The prophet Isaiah bemoans how far they have wandered. Isaiah longs for God to come down and reform his wayward people.

Be Irreproachable!

Saint Paul exhorts the members of the Christian community in Corinth to remain firm in the faith as they await the Day of the Lord, the final day when Christ returns in glory to this world. As his followers, our calling is to remain irreproachable until then.

Be Watchful!

Jesus warns his disciples to watch and be prepared. They will not know the exact hour of the fulfillment of God's kingdom. So they must remain alert for the coming of the fullness of the kingdom.

Church Teaching: Awaiting the Kingdom

To even the most casual observer—even one who ascribes to no faith in God whatsoever—it is clear that this world we live in is not perfect. Things go awry constantly. People get hurt. People get sick. People do harm to other people.

As believers, we know that this broken condition of the world results from Original Sin. We, however, rejoice because of our faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who offers Redemption in a newness of life, and the promise of eternal life. In effect, Christ has won our Salvation.

Not only does Christ represent Salvation, Christ embodies our Salvation. Baptized into his saving mystery, we are adopted as children of God. We are sons and daughters of a glorious future, when the fullness of the kingdom will be revealed. This is our Christian inheritance.

Advent

The season of Advent celebrates not only the first coming of Christ in history, but it also celebrates the glorious fullness of the kingdom, which is yet to be achieved. In Advent, we look forward to fix our faith firmly on the Lord Jesus. Grounded in his promise of eternal life, we look forward in this holy season with great expectation to the end of time, when we hope that all will be joined to Christ forever in Heaven.

Preparation

Yet we do not passively wait for the fullness of the Kingdom of God. Jesus enjoins us to be prepared, to watch for his coming. We remain committed, faithful members of the Church. We contemplate the Word of God in Sacred Scripture. We celebrate the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. We join together to prepare for the coming of the kingdom by promoting justice, peace, and love in all our relationships. We, therefore, act as lights in the world, illuminating the path to the kingdom.

The Church is the lighthouse for the kingdom. Her members are lights in society. We patiently and inexorably are called to illuminate for the world the ways of God. As we exert our influence to gather all men and women into the nave (or ship) of Christ, we stand at the helm as did the earliest Christians, and declare, “*Marana tha*, Come, Lord Jesus.”

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

In the face of war and poverty, believers are not helpless. We work for the coming of the kingdom by seeking to make the world a better place. We know that the fullness of the kingdom will be ushered into this world by the Lord Jesus. And yet we do our part as his alert disciples so that we might stand ready for his Second Coming.

Key Terms

MARANATHA

Aramaic for “Our Lord, come”, this is as much a plea as a triumphant proclamation of hope in the Second Coming (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 671).

ORIGINAL SIN

Rejection of God’s ways by our primeval parents; they chose to follow their will against the will of God (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 397).

SECOND COMING

Christ’s return in glory at the end of time, when he will judge the living and the dead, bringing the fullness of the kingdom (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 681).

Voices of Faith

[God] will be the consummation of all our desiring—the object of our unending vision, of our unlessering love, of our unwearying praise. And in this gift of vision, this response of love, this paean of praise, all alike will share, as all will share in everlasting life.

—Saint Augustine

We travel on the highways of the world knowing that [Christ] is beside us, supported by the hope of being able to see him one day face to face, in the definitive encounter.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 669 (Christ dwells now on Earth in his Church), 1042 (renewal of world at Second Coming), 2749 (Jesus’ prayer and consummation at end times)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:

Chapter 13, especially the section entitled “The New Heaven and the New Earth,” pages 157-158

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:

133 (Christ reigns now), 134 (Second Coming), 216 (renewal of all things)