

Monday 2nd Week of Advent: St. Ambrose

Isaiah 35:1-10, Luke 5:17-26

St. Ambrose of Milan, one of the doctors of the Church and whose feast is celebrated today, was someone whose faith impacted on His life and his love of the Lord shone through all that He did. The Church in her wisdom gives us seasons in the Church's year to take stock, to reflect upon our Christian journey, and to recommit to Christ and to consider how much our own lives reflect our Christian faith.

New year resolutions are so common but how many outlast January? Advent is the beginning of the Church's new year and it's only 4 weeks, so the resolutions don't have to last long. In fact, there are only three weeks left! In the first reading we hear Isaiah saying "courage, do not be afraid" (v.4) and in the Gospel Jesus reveals who He is by forgiving our sins. Advent gives us the opportunity to not to be afraid to make changes in the sure knowledge that the Holy Spirit will guide us, and in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, our sins will be forgiven by Jesus Christ. Below are some ideas on how we can make what is left of Advent a time of spiritual renewal and preparation for the great feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

A – Added prayer, e.g. pray for your immediate neighbours each day, or pray for those whose Christmas cards arrive on the doorstep. Pray that this virus will bring people closer to Christ, who is the only constant in these uncertain times.

D – Delve into the Bible – Decide to read the Bible more; such as reading the Gospel for each day (you can access the readings here www.universalis.com) reflecting upon His Sacred word.

V – Venturing out to other people – whilst this is not so easy to do this physically this year, we can make that extra phone call to people who are on their own or may be send a card to someone who is not normally on our list, with a chatty letter.

E – Expectation of Christ – keep always in mind that Christ is coming, the end of time may be tomorrow – are we awake, as last week's Gospel reminded us, or are we sleepwalking through each day.

N – Near; Christ is very near – He leads us to His Father by the grace of the Holy Spirit. "The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.... If you obey the words ... of the Lord your God ... by loving [Him], ... and by keeping His commandments ... then ... Lord your God will bless you" (Deut. 30:14, 16).

This Old Testament passage is fulfilled in Christ, the Eternal Son of God, who became Man to leads us to our promised Land, Eternal Life with Him in Glory.

T – Time — is a gift to us from God, who ordained that certain times and seasons are for celebrating His work in our salvation. Let us therefore give Time, one of the most precious gifts that we can give, to Christ and time to one another.

(Carol Ann Harnett)