

Advent means ...

Hard to believe ... but in a couple of weeks, we begin our preparations to “faithfully” celebrate another Christmas. This preparation time is called Advent! Advent means “coming” and, simply put, Advent is the season when we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. You learn an awful lot when you teach religion to children. I recall an incident that happened to me in a former parish where kids taught me something about Advent.

One day, while teaching at a grade school at the parish where I was assigned, I was telling the sixth graders about Advent as the time that we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. “But, Father Dennis,” a young fellow said, “Jesus already came that first Christmas, in Bethlehem, in the stable. So how can we get ready for His coming now? He already came!” I’d like to try my best to answer that question in this reflection sharing about the three comings of Christ at Christmas. If you don’t mind me saying it in a poetic way, Our Lord comes to us in **history**, in **mystery**, and in **majesty**.

His Coming in History What we actually mean by Christ coming in history is that at a specific time and place, God became Man and entered the human drama. Advent can be a great time to recollect our utter dependence and need for God made Man, who has broken into the history of the world, to save us.

His Coming in Mystery Jesus is reborn in our lives every single day in a myriad of ways if we but recognize Him with the eyes of faith. Yet Christ comes in mystery day in and day out. Advent is an opportunity to re-sensitize our faith so that we’re able to sense His coming in the very plain, ordinary ways of life and in the mysteries of our faith. Have you stopped finding Christ in the present? Seek Him out. Spend time in prayer and praise, in doing acts of charity, and expect to experience His coming in mystery.

His Coming in Majesty

Everything here in life, as beautiful and as wonderful as it is, is only a hint of what awaits us when Christ comes in majesty at the end of time. There’s an old saying that we should view everything “under the aspect of eternity.” It is a way of looking at what I’m doing right now and asking: Is this going to help to hurt me get to heaven? Is this going to assist or to harm my salvation? Our choices should be based on what is going to have the best “eternal” consequence for us. When He comes in majesty, all creation will bow down in homage. When He came in history, the angels announced peace on earth. When He comes in majesty, those same angels will divide all creatures for eternal reckoning.

“Come, Lord Jesus!” Repeat this prayer often during this Season of Advent and you will recognize with the eyes of faith that, in praying it sincerely, Our Lord has already answered it, will answer it, and will answer it again. “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).