

Ad te levavi
St. Matthew 21:1-9
November 28th, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Myrtle Beach, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Multitudes Cried Out

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Merciful God and Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast caused the Sun of Righteousness to rise upon those that dwelt in darkness; and we beseech Thee, graciously break the power of darkness in our hearts, that we may continually increase in the knowledge of Thy truth, and serve Thee in righteousness and true holiness; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The end of the Church's Year and the beginning of the Church's Year both point us to the coming of the Son of God, our Lord + Jesus Christ. We have entered into the season called Advent. Advent is from the Latin *ad Veni*, that is, to come. This season that we have entered is all about the coming of our Lord. Our Lord + Jesus comes to us during this season in three ways: past, present, and future. In the past our Lord + Jesus came to us as a Baby born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He took upon Himself our flesh, and became man. God became man for us, so that He might fulfill that which we are unable to, and to endure the punishment that we deserve, so that we do not have to suffer that punishment.

Our Lord + Jesus still comes to us today, in the present, through His Word and Sacraments. Wherever two or three, or more, are gathered around our Lord's Word and Sacraments—His means of grace—our Lord + Jesus is coming to us. He is present among us in the preaching of the Gospel, where we hear about His wonderful works that He has done on our behalf to win our redemption and bring to us salvation. He is present with us daily as we remember our Holy Baptism, and daily drown the Old Adam in contrition when we remember that not only are we all poor, miserable sinners, but we have been raised as new creations through the waters of Holy Baptism, to be pure and clean from our sins. Our Lord + Jesus is there with us as we are daily drowned and brought again alive through contrition and faith as He intercedes to our heavenly Father for us poor sinners. Our faith reminds us that just as He was buried in the grave and rose again on the third day, our sins have also been buried in the grave, and we live before Him in righteousness and innocence forever.

Our Lord + Jesus also comes to us today in His Body and Blood given to us through bread and wine. We meet our Lord + Jesus here at this altar, as He comes to give to us forgiveness for our sins, and to keep us as members of His eternal Kingdom which we will inherit when we die, because He has rescued and saved us from our enemies of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. On the tree of the holy cross, He shed His Blood for us, so that sin, death, and the devil would no longer have any more power over us. When He comes to us today, we are blessed to be in His presence, even as the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi were blessed to be in the presence of the Lord of all

creation.

The third way that our Lord + Jesus comes to us is in the future; but not long in the future. He will come to us on the Last Day to judge both the quick and the dead. We will be taken into our eternal home and Heaven, and we will enjoy eternal life with all the saints who have gone before us. We will sing the eternal Liturgy, and in Heaven, music's voice will never be silent. There will be singing and rejoicing eternally in that glorious heavenly realm. When we gather here for worship, we get a foretaste of that heavenly realm, which is why it is important for us to be here as often as we can, so that we do not lose sight of the reward that is ours through our Lord's suffering and death.

In the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew the Lord + Jesus also comes to His people. He comes to them lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. One may find it weird that the Palm Sunday Gospel comes to us on the First Day in Advent. This is for three reasons: one, the focus for us from this text today is about our Lord's coming to His people. The second is that it presents to us a picture of what it will be like in Heaven. When our Lord comes to us to take us to that eternal home, we will be like these multitudes in Jerusalem who cried out that their Savior had come to them. The third is that the Church year always begins with the reason for our Lord's coming to this Earth. He came to suffer and die.

The Lord came to the people of Jerusalem lowly and humble; on His way to suffering, crucifixion and death. He came to them to win for them salvation, by redeeming them through His offered Body and shed Blood on the tree of the holy cross. The multitudes did not realize fully the extent of their praise for the Lord. They praised Him as the returning King; the descendant of King David who would take His throne and wear the crown and bear His scepter. They thought He would establish a temporal earthly Kingdom, but our Lord + Jesus came to establish an eternal, heavenly Kingdom. He does this by offering up His life on the tree of the holy cross. His throne would be the cross of His crucifixion. His crown would be a crown of thorns placed upon His head. His scepter would be the spear that pierced His side, confirming His death as blood and water poured out, establishing that our redemption from sin and death was accomplished.

This, my dear friends, is how the Church's year begins. It begins with the reason for our Lord's coming to us. He came to us to save us from sin, death and the power of the devil. The multitudes cried out not knowing the reason for our Lord's coming. Many in our society today are unaware of the reason why we celebrate our Lord's Nativity. They are all too eager to skip from Halloween right into Christmas, with a short break for Thanksgiving. We as Christians have already been subjected to "Christmas carols" (or what passes for Christmas carols in our society) for several weeks now. This world and society have no understanding of why this holiday even exists. If you ask them, you get some sort of amalgamation of caring and sharing, and being with friends and family. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with being kind to one another, but this is not why our Lord + Jesus came and took upon Himself our flesh. He came to suffer and die. He came to win for us salvation for us and all mankind, so that those who believe on Him might have eternal life.

Like the multitudes in the Gospel reading who so longed for some rescue from the pain and misery of their poor sinful lives, our society tries to wrench Christmas away from the Church to make it into something it is not. All so that they can grasp onto something that will deliver them from their sin-filled lives. Like the multitudes, they grasp onto the wrong thing. They grasp onto something temporal and terminal. Our Lord + Jesus comes to bring us, and everyone, something eternal and everlasting to which we may cling. He comes to bring this world an everlasting Kingdom and home, where multitudes upon multitudes will cry out to the Lord and give Him praise and thanks for all that He has done to redeem us and all mankind. We will give Him thanks and praise eternally as we cry out in song that our Lord has redeemed us from sin, death, and the devil by taking His place on His throne of the tree of the holy cross.

This is why it is important for the Church, and all of us, her members, do not get caught up in the misleading revelries of this world and society. This is why we as the Church observe this season of Advent. For we know that this life will pass away, and that we will be given an eternal life. Therefore, we prepare for that life to come by preparing in this Advent season for our Lord's coming. Yes, we will hear on Christmas Day of our Lord's birth—of His coming to us in His flesh as a Baby to redeem us. And yes, we give thanks that our Lord + Jesus continues to come to us today to remind us whenever we are gathered around His Word and Sacraments that He has won for us a Kingdom. But, let us also not forget that our Lord will come on the Last Day to judge us poor, miserable sinners. He will come to judge the whole Earth, both the quick and the dead.

Therefore, my dear friends, in this penitential season of Advent let us with contrite hearts, confess our sins and believe that on account of the Christ we have salvation. Not because of anything we have done, but solely on account of our Lord + Jesus' entering into Jerusalem to offer up His life as a ransom for ours. We prepare our hearts and minds for our Lord's coming not with revelry, but with reflection; reflection upon what our Lord + Jesus has done for us poor, miserable sinners. For the day will come when our Lord + Jesus will come again and take us to our eternal home, and all the multitudes of Heaven will cry out in thanksgiving to the Lamb in His Kingdom for all His mercies toward us. For He has offered up His life in our flesh as a ransom for us and all mankind, so that all those who believe on Him will have eternal life where we will sing of His works forever and ever. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Awaken us, Lord God, that we may be ready when Thy Son cometh to receive Him with gladness and serve Thee with a pure heart; through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!