

The Faith of Our Fathers

“Tell this to the daughter of Zion,” the prophet says. “Open your mouth and shout so she is not offended by His lowly coming but listens to what is proclaimed.” Let your ears give insight to your eyes. Your King has no great stallion, no spurs, no saddle. He is poor and rides a donkey. And yet there’s no king like Him. He removes your sin, rescues you from death and hell, and gives you everlasting holiness and righteousness, eternal life and blessedness. So don’t pay any heed to the wretched way in which He comes and then later also shamefully dies on the cross. For He does this all for your sake as Savior to help you, to sanctify you and rescue you from death. (Blessed Martin Luther) ❧❧❧

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom. At the first coming he was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At his second coming he will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming he endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming he will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels. We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (St. Cyril of Jerusalem) ❧❧❧

The Lord, who is everywhere present and pervades all things, is coming. He is coming to achieve in you His work of salvation. He is coming who came to call to repentance not the righteous but sinner, coming to recall those who have strayed into sin. Do not be afraid, then. “God is in the midst of you, and you shall not be shaken.” Receive Him with open, outstretched hands. For it was on His own hands that He sketched you. Receive Him who laid your foundations on the palms of His hands. Receive Him, for He took upon Himself all that belongs to us except sin, to consume what is ours in what is His. Be glad city of Zion, our mother and fear not. “Celebrate your feasts.” Glorify Him for His mercy, who has come to us in you. (Andrew of Crete) ❧❧❧

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Let us spread before the Lord's feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in His grace, or rather, clothed completely in Him. We who have been baptized into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before Him. Let us show him honor, not with olive branches but with the splendor of merciful deeds to one another. Let us spread the thoughts and desires of our hearts under his feet like garments, so that entering us with the whole of His being, He may draw the whole of our being into Himself and place the whole of His in us. (St. Andrew of Crete) ❧❧❧

There are three comings of our Lord; the first in the flesh, the second in our soul, the third at the judgment. The first coming is long since past, for Christ has been seen on the earth and has conversed among men. We are now in the second coming. As for the third coming, it is most certain that it will be, most uncertain when it will be. So the first coming was humble and hidden. The second is mysterious and full of love. And the third will be majestic and terrible. In His first coming, Christ was judged by men unjustly. In His second, He renders us just by His grace. And in His third, He will judge all things with His justice. (Peter of Blois) ❧❧❧

The prophet says, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, Your King comes.'" The daughter of Zion is the Church which is associated with the heavenly Jerusalem, the Mother of us all. The king enters gently, for it is not God's habit to give an earthly kingdom to the merciless, but a heavenly kingdom to the gentle. A gentle king bestows a land of peace upon the gentle; that is, upon those who are humble in heart. Previously, a wicked prince (the devil), by the affliction of pride, had spread warfare and tribulation. But the gentle King—the Christ—enters to rest in the hearts of the humble, and to quiet those who trembled. In this way, He covers to the grace of faith and truth those who had suffered under the yoke and oppression of the law and God's wrath. (St. Bede the Venerable) ❧❧❧

For *Ad Te Levanti*, the *First Sunday in Advent*. These excerpts are intended as meditative pieces for the Day's pericopes. They have been edited and abridged for style, sense and space.

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