

“Awaiting the Messiah”

SCRIPTURE:

“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in heaven will be shaken.

Then they will see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Jesus said to his disciples, “Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake... You do not know when the Master of the house is coming. “ Mark 13: 24-26, 32-33, 35, 37.

REFLECTION:

We live in a busy world. As the year draws to a close, our personal, family and faith calendars are filled with meetings, programs, sending holiday greetings, decorating our homes, shopping, traffic jams and more—all in anticipation of celebrating a joyous Christmas Day. Our personal agendas have so consumed us that the real reason for the season is far from our minds. Too many of us have forgotten to include the Season of Advent, the season of expectation, preparation, waiting, and hope.

The word, “advent” means “coming” or “arrival.” During the Season of Advent, the four Sundays preceding Christmas, the Christian community is called to slow down, to break away from worldly attachments, to focus on the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ and his coming again. We celebrate the hope embodied in the purity, potential and possibility of the incarnate One, the long-expected king, the fulfillment of prophesy. We celebrate the fact that the Savior has come as we light the candles in the Advent wreath, the first one being the candle of hope. We can celebrate corporately in our places of worship, but Advent also lends itself to preparing our households for Christmas as we light a candle daily, say our prayers and read Scriptures. Advent symbolizes our spiritual journeys as we affirm that Christ has come. The Holy Spirit quietly and gently works on drawing us closer and more fully into Christ’s presence, reconfiguring our priorities so that we can hear the announcement that Christ is very near.

Our Scripture passage, Mark 13: 24-37, speaks of the second coming of Christ and shows a series of events in the sky that will announce the coming of the Son of Man. Mark speaks of the sun being darkened, the moon not giving light, the stars falling from heaven and the powers in heaven being shaken. This is so different from the First Coming of the Christ, yet so many missed it because they were asleep. Christ is coming again and the warning goes forth, “Stay awake for you know not when He will return.” At Advent, we light a candle in preparation for that day.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Savior of the world came as a baby, born to a poor family of low estate, and was rejected and despised of men. Today, the Children’s Defense Fund advocates on behalf of children just like the baby Jesus. Today, while Congress debates and employs all kinds of political tactics, more than 8 million children lack health coverage. Too many of them are sick and many will die from preventable diseases

because they will not receive the affordable, comprehensive and accessible health care that they deserve. Like the baby Jesus, too many are born in poverty to single mothers. Far too many are homeless and there is no room in the inn. To this nation's shame and perhaps even to ours, they are assigned to the Cradle to Prison Pipeline. This Advent season we light a candle of hope for them.

PRAYER:

God, break through the clutter of my life to announce your Divine Presence. Interrupt my routines and cause me to prioritize according to your agenda. Speak to my heart during this season as you spoke to the prophets of old. Give me courage to speak boldly about children's health care. Help me to be alert and constantly watching for your coming. Amen.

Written by Reverend Lula G. Williams, Children's Defense Fund Religious Action Division.