

Romans 13:11-12 (KJV)

And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. ¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Always we begin again,

That saying, "Always we begin again," from the Benedictine Prayer Book is so true and especially so today, the First Sunday of Advent, the time when we, the Church, begins another liturgical year.

Paul tells us *let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*

Always we begin again.

Today, let us begin again. Let us begin again to live as God would have us live.

Our Christian journey is not on some Eisenhower Interstate System superhighway, broad and paved, where we can go cruising from point to point.

The Christian journey for most of us, I would bet it is more like all of us, is not a straight line effort. There are many switches and side trips, many times of retracing our steps, many times of slips and falls on this rocky path that we have chosen.

We are always having to *cast off the works of darkness* and having to *put on the armour of light*, not once, not twice, but many times in our lifetimes.

Conversion is a lifetime proposition, a lifetime effort, because we are mortal human beings with our mortal human being faults, foibles and failures.

God knows this. That is why he has sent his Holy Spirit to strengthen us and to guide us, day after day after day.

Always we begin again.

The Church in its wisdom gives us the liturgical year, a cycle of time to remind us that our lives have a definite cycle of time. This season of Advent is both the beginning of that cycle and the end, the alpha and the omega. We are at the point as Paul says, *that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

We are reminded that our days are limited as the Psalmist wrote, ***Psalm 90:10 (KJV)*** *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

Then he says, ***Psalm 90:12 (KJV)*** *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Advent reminds us that Christ is coming back and that we need to be prepared for the King, to be prepared for the Bridegroom. We are reminded that He will come back to in triumph, while at the same time Advent reminds us that He is coming to us again as the Babe of Bethlehem, born in a lowly cave stable, God Incarnate.

Always, we begin again.

Advent calls us to remember that our journey has a beginning and an end and that we do not have that much time left for as Paul says ¹²*The night is far spent, the day is at hand*

Also, Advent is the way the Church reminds us that God, in his infinite mercy, gives us time after time to *cast off the works of darkness*, to put away from us those things in our life that keep us from God and to *put on the armour of light*, to let God come live in us.

Always, we begin again.

This Advent let us begin again.

Amen.