

SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(MATT. 22:34-23:39)



To close the golden chain of the Sundays of Lent, it would be impossible to find a more appropriately meaningful name for it, than the Sunday of Advent. This closure is particularly meaningful for the fact that the Sunday of Advent is dedicated not only to the Second Coming of Christ but also to His First Coming, as stated by the hymn (sharagan) of the day.

This Sunday, in commemorating the First Coming of Jesus, aims at refreshing our minds of the fundamental truth that our rise from fall and our restoration may be possible only by the incarnation of Christ and by other ministrations attached to it.

The main idea, moreover, contained in the Gospel Reading of the day's Divine Liturgy is the fact that Christ was the expected Messiah and the Savior of mankind. Jesus himself asks: "What do you think of Christ (the Messiah)? Whose son is he? ..." All the books of the New Testament ascertain that there will be a Second Coming of Christ, who will come this time not as a gentle and lowly Savior, but as a righteous judge. He will come in the glory of His Father surrounded by angels to judge humanity as the shepherd who separates sheep from goats.

Our eternal destiny will be decided by the good deeds (deeds of faith) that we have or have not done. The "everlasting" life will be inherited by those who have given food to the hungry, a hand to the fallen, and consolation to the afflicted. Those who have not performed such charities will be deprived of the highest reward. It is not said, however, what will be the destiny of those who have grabbed the food of the hungry or those who have caused suffering all about them. Even the "miracles" that we might have wrought in the name of Christ, even these will not be considered to be sufficient for gaining eternal life, because we have still failed to reconcile a single broken heart.

The most significant sequence of the Lenten Sundays comes to an end by the mention of the greatest drama of the universe. But the drama of life does not end with the Second Coming of Christ and with the scenes related to it. On the contrary, the Second Coming of Christ opens a new era, a new heaven and a new earth, where there will be neither "Lent nor the necessities that make Lent indispensable". "Joy, gladness and justice" will then dwell there. The inhabitants of the place will be only "the conquerors", that is, the conquerors over evil.