



## Did You Know?

December 19, 2021

Advent is a time of preparation – preparation for the celebration of Jesus coming at Christmas and preparation for when Jesus comes again. This Advent season, we are going to focus on the later by exploring the Creed.

The Creed is the summary of our faith and it gives us a set of beliefs that build the foundation of the faith Christ passed on to us through the apostles. We profess in the Creed that Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead. We will be judged on how well we loved, on how well we served.

Just as Jesus passed on the faith to the apostles, he also passed on the mission he began through what is called the Great Commission. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he instructed the apostles to, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the ages.” (Mt 28:19-20)

As lay people, we do not baptize; the administering of the sacraments is reserved for our ordained priests and deacons. However, the remainder of the Great Commission is something we can all do. We can tell others about Jesus, teaching them all he commanded us to do. The Great Commission is also centered on the Trinity, just as is the Creed, rooting us deeply into Father, Son and Holy Spirit as we accomplish the mission left to us.

When we teach others about the faith, we fulfill what was begun in us at Confirmation - to spread and defend the faith by our words and actions. When our words and actions are rooted in living a faith-filled life, we help teach others about the faith, about the God who loves us and is with us always. It can be a challenge spreading and defending the faith, loving and serving others, and observing all that Jesus commanded us. That’s when we need to focus on the love of God, for we are not alone. Jesus

promised to be with us “until the end of the ages”.

As mentioned earlier, we profess in the Creed that Jesus will come again. This is what Advent is about – waiting for the coming of Jesus. We celebrate when he came at Christmas, and we wait for when he comes again. But Jesus isn’t just coming at his second coming. *Parousia* is a Greek word that means ‘arrival’. It is used to refer to the second coming of Christ, which the angels tell about at the Ascension: “*This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will return in the same way as you have seen him going into heaven.*” (Acts 1:11) The word *Parousia* also refers to Jesus’ continual coming, his ongoing presence to and in his Church.

When Jesus goes to Bethany when Lazarus dies, he says to Martha, “*I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?*”

Martha says, “*Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.*” Martha doesn’t say “came”. She says “the one who is *coming*, *Parousia*. Jesus’ coming is ongoing.

We are witnesses to Jesus’ ongoing coming in the kind words of a stranger, in the laughter of children, in a comforting hug, in the readings at Mass. And most importantly, Jesus is coming to us in the Eucharist. He is ever present to us every time we receive him in Holy Communion. Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us. He is with us as we are sent forth at the end of Mass to do his work here on this earth as we teach others to observe all that he has commanded us.