

1st Sunday in Advent 12/2/18
Luke 19:28-40 C

BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

Happy New Year! Today is the beginning of a new Church Year and, as strange as it may sound to your ears, that is really the calendar we should live our lives by. We live in a world with a different calendar, and that is really the calendar that dictates the rhythm of our lives. What I mean is that you have a dentist appointment on January 29, not the Tuesday of Third Sunday after the Epiphany, right?

But, this is the best New Year's, as the entire year focuses on our Lord Jesus Christ – His birth, His appearing, His passion and death, His resurrection and His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His teaching, which makes us wise unto salvation in Him and makes known to us what a holy, God-pleasing life is. Throughout the entire year, we cry in faith, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Especially today, as we begin a new Church Year, our bulletin cover teaches us that same One who rode into Jerusalem, is the same One who rides, into the water and Word of our baptism to make us God's own child; who rides into your ears with His words of eternal life; who rides with His Body and Blood into your mouth; He rides into your heart to rule and reign as your King. And, He is the same One who will come again in glory on the last day, who will raise our bodies from the dust of the earth, that body and soul, we will enter into the joy of the Lord, forever, without end.

A new Year means a new calendar. For those of you who have been in my study, you know that I have one of those desk pad calendars on my desk. At the start of a new year, it is so new, so crisp, so neat. The corners are not ripped and torn. There are no coffee stains; no notes, no

phone numbers, no dates written in haste that are completely and totally unreadable. Every page is clean. Every month is filled with the promise of a fresh start.

There is just something wonderful about a new year. It is filled with new hopes, new dreams, it promises everything new. It means that we can lose weight, exercise more; spend more time with friends and family; I can get my books organized. And then there's your team – if this last season was bad, a new year gives you the promise and hope of a new and better season to come.

Do you know what else a new year brings? The promise of Jesus coming. Oh, how we long for Jesus!

This world as we know it today is dark, dangerous, violent; it's so easy for us little lambs to become frightened and scared. I traveled to the funeral of my aunt and godmother this past Wednesday, although "traveled" is the wrong word, maybe I should say "skated". We made it fine, but especially for those traveling from Florida and Alabama, it was interesting to say the least. There were a few missed flights, and stays in hotels along the way, but we arrived safely. You've been there, done that, right. Driving on that ice, that white out, and even when you arrive at your destination, you're still tense, nerves frayed. Maybe you've got that biopsy coming this week. Maybe you had a disagreement with you spouse. Well, it really wasn't a disagreement, more like a caged match of death, and now you sit in unease, wondering if he/she will even talk to you. You hear of school shootings, and send your little ones off in the morning, thinking, well, that couldn't happen here, could it? There just seems to be so much anger, bitterness in the world today, it just seems like every one is just

poised to jump in your face and yell and scream. So, we cry, “Hosanna, Save us now. Come save us, Lord Jesus.”

He heard our cry, and He came to save us at His birth. The night of His birth, a heavenly host filled the night sky to praise God, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased (Lk 3:14).” And, He grew in wisdom and stature (Lk 2:52). At the age of 30, He was baptized by John to the sin-bearer of the world’s sin. So, He rides – He rides into Jerusalem on the back of a colt at the beginning of Holy Week, going where He was warned not to go, to die and rise for you. He is condemned for you, in your place. He is sacrificed upon the altar of the cross for you and for me. And, He rises the 3rd day to break the hold sin, death, and the devil have on you.

He did that so that He could be, as Jeremiah teaches us, “The LORD is our righteousness (Jer 33:16).” He fulfilled all righteousness, so that He may clothe with us His righteousness, His perfect goodness to cover over all our sin, that we may be holy and pleasing before God.

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! The first time He came to be our Savior. As we live this day in this vale of tears, we cry, “Hosanna, save us now,” and He comes to us in Word and Sacraments.

In the new birth of Holy Baptism, He clothes and dresses in the whole armor of God for life in this church militant, as we struggle with the devil, the world, and the weakness of our own flesh. He fastens on us the belt of truth; the breastplate of righteousness. For shoes, He puts on our feet the readiness given by the Gospel of peace. In all circumstances, we have the shield of faith, with which we can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, wearing the helmet of salvation and holding the sword of the Spirit.

He does that so that we may be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (cf. Eph. 6:10-17).

He breathes His Holy Word into us, as we hear it, read it, and sing it. And, He feeds us with His Body and Blood. Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, we cry, "Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And, He does. He comes to us, riding in on bread and wine to feed us His life-giving Body and Blood.

Through these means, He enters into your heart, to abide with you, to rule and reign as your King. He does that because we have a Savior who sympathizes with us (cf. He 4:15). He knows every one of your problems, your aches and pains, your struggles, your frustration and your fears. You have a Savior who says to you,

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mt 11:28-30)."

So, He comes to you to give you rest, that His rod and staff may comfort and cheer you.

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord, who still comes to us as our Savior in Word and Sacraments.

St. Paul teaches us, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ph 3:20). And so, as strangers here, we cry, "Hosanna, save us now," to hasten the coming of His coming of glory. We want to be with Jesus, to be forever where He is, because that means we will rest from all of our struggles and He will wipe all the tears from our eyes.

That means this great tribulation, this awful, hectic, unhappy tribulation is over. No more slaughter, school shootings, riots, murders,

theft, vandalism. No more hatred, bigotry, injustice. No more doctors' visits and x-rays and treatments. No more pain, sadness, loneliness. No more fear.

Our Lord Christ comes to save us and reign over us. He saved us by His coming as a child to Bethlehem. He comes today in Word and Sacrament. And, that glorious day is coming when He will take us to be with Him, that we may be with all those who have gone before in Christ. Hosanna, Come now, and save us, Lord Jesus. And, He does. Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!