

This Sunday we begin the season of Advent in preparation for Christmas. We also begin a new cycle of readings: Year C. And so we are reminded of the cyclical nature of our lives: the unfolding of the seasons only to be repeated at the beginning of another year.

The cycles of nature, night and day, the phases of the moon, the yearly cycle of seasons give shape and meaning to our lives. But of course we are not caught up in endless repetitions. We are also aware of the lineal nature of time. We are constantly moving forward. We have an end point, a goal, a destiny.

Advent is not only about preparing to celebrate the annual celebration of Christ's birth but also about our future in Christ. As we are reminded in the Church documents: *Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.* (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar # 39)

And so, as Christmas comes around again for another year Advent invites us to ponder our future, a future pregnant with the promise of joy and fulfilment in Christ. The protestant theologian Paul Tillich sums this up beautifully: *Our time is a time of waiting; waiting is its special destiny. And every time is a time of waiting, waiting for the breaking in of eternity. All time runs forward. All time, both history, and in personal life, is expectation. Time itself is waiting, waiting, not for another time, but for that which is eternal.*

***Peace & blessings,
Gerard***