

The season of Advent prepares us to look at the world through Christ's eyes: it prepares us for his coming into our life in a richer and more realistic way. Sometimes we think that we prepare by ignoring the world we live in; or we imagine that the difficulties of this life are somehow an obstacle between ourselves and God. But Christ makes it plain that we prepare for his coming precisely by taking a searching look at *this* world and perceiving, through the disorder, the guiding hand of God. With Christ's insight we can enjoy the vision of Jeremiah and Paul: we can recognise that God is truly with us.

## Application

How can we absorb that assurance of God's presence enjoyed by Jeremiah and Paul? How can we learn to look at the world through Christ's eyes? These are tasks for life. But Advent is a time set aside to stop and reflect in a special way on how Christ comes into our life.

First, Advent directs us to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Our faith is not founded on feelings or emotions. It is founded on one clear fact: that in the birth of Jesus Christ, God came into the world as a human being.

Second, Advent directs our attention to Christ's coming in our everyday life. He comes when we least expect him: in the awkward person we have to deal with; when we are feeling unwell and are tired with the difficulties of life. Our daily prayer helps us to prepare for those moments.

Finally, Advent directs us to Christ's coming for the last time – the "day [that] will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap". If we have contemplated his coming at Christmas and in our daily life, this final coming will be no fearful scanning of the horizon, hoping we will not be caught unawares. On the contrary, it will be a welcoming of a God who has been as close to us as he is in our celebration of the Eucharist: a God with whom we have been in such close communion that we have learned to see the world through his eyes.