

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Seldom has the postman ever been the cause of an outbreak of temper as he was on Monday of this week. What was it that came through the door you might ask to bring about raised blood pressure and raised voices? It wasn't a bill or unsolicited mail, these I can cope with. Nor was it another citation for jury duty for which I have received many even though I am exempt.



No, on Monday morning in among the usual mixture of junk mail and the latest instructions from the Diocese was a Christmas card. I haven't opened it yet because to be honest it was maddening for me to receive a card on 20<sup>th</sup> November wishing me a merry Christmas. I simply know what it is because the sender had a label on the back and it couldn't be anything else. Roaring down the phone to my sister I gave her a lecture of liturgy and on everything that is wrong with sending such cards at that time. Her offer of the excuse maybe they just like to be organized early didn't ease the situation and anyway you've been selling them in the stall since October!

Advent you see, and remember it wasn't even Advent, isn't about Christmas cards. It is about Christ and his return to the world at the end of time. Yes, the shops want to play Mary's Boy child from Halloween but as Christians we need to resist that in this sacred season and see it for what it truly is.

And what it truly is is seen in today's scriptures, it is, as Isaiah says, a time to allow God to teach us his ways that we may walk in his paths. It is a time in fact to do away with our anger turning swords into ploughs, spears into sickles.

It is a season to recognize that we have been sleepy in the life of faith and may have fallen into bad habits.

And it is a time given to us to set matters right as we prepare in these initial days for glorious return of Christ at the end of time.

Yes all the other things matter too; yes they are important, showing

our love and affection for others, wanting to be connected to them.  
But they are all secondary to preparing for Chris who calls us to  
stand ready for him who will come at hour we do not expect.