

Advent IV Sermon 2 by Bishop Michael Hawkins

By the Right Reverend Michael W. Hawkins

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There standeth one among you whom you know not.

In Advent, we consider the coming of God in Jesus Christ, and we prepare for the commemoration of his first coming in humility, to save, and for his coming again in glory, to judge. Christ has come and Christ shall come again, but he is also always and everywhere with us. He is ever present as both Saviour and Judge.

Jesus said, “Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of you.” So he is among us in this and every Christian assembly, church or congregation.

He said that his words never pass away. He speaks to us in the Scriptures, and he teaches us still. He says to us, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my words.” So he is among us in the

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Scriptures.

Jesus said, “This is my body, this is my blood.” Paul warns us about the danger of not recognizing the Lord’s body in the Eucharist, failing to recognize that Christ is with us and among us in the breaking of the bread.

Finally, Jesus himself tells us that he is with us in the least of these his brothers and sisters, in the hungry and thirsty, in the stranger, in the naked and sick and prisoner. And he warns us, “Inasmuch as ye cared or didn’t care for these, ye did it to me.”

Both John and Paul remind us today that Christ is with us, among us. The Lord is at hand, he stands among you, behold him! And the judgment is this, that we do not know him, recognize and honour him among us.

Either we behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, or there stands one among us whom we know not.

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Either way, Jesus is present as Saviour and Judge, or we might say, as Saviour or Judge.

John saw Jesus coming toward him. I hope that by faith, we can know that as well, that we can recognize Jesus coming to us, in all the little advents of our lives. For the Christian, every event is a potential advent, an opportunity to recognize and welcome the coming of God in Christ among us. “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” Jesus is present, among us, in the Scriptures and Breaking of Bread, in the fellowship of believers and the needy. In the Eucharist and in our celebration of Christmas both here and at home, let us heed John’s call and Behold, look for and recognize the Lamb of God coming to us and among us.