

## First Sunday of Advent November 27, 2022

*“Pilate said to them, ‘Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ “  
(Matthew 27:22)*

In our world today, many questions beg our attention. Topics like the economy, racial and gender equality and, of course, COVID. We wonder, moment-by-moment, what world leaders in other countries—Ukraine, Russia, China, North Korea—are going to pull next. We even ponder where our own leaders—Church and State—are going to lead us. Yet all of these questions pale in the face of the one question Pilate asked of the mob gathered in the praetorium that day, the question at the top of this handout, *“Then what should I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?”*

This question is timeless, the greatest question asked in the last 2000 years. Through all time, it has called for more of man’s attention than any other. Herod, shortly after His birth, wanted to answer by putting Him to death, as told in Matthew’s Gospel. Simeon, in Luke’s Gospel, righteous and devout, wanted only to see Him, to fulfill all of his own dreams. Mary and Joseph, when He was twelve years old, searched for three days, worried that He was lost or injured. Nicodemus, the Pharisee, came by night to question who He was and where He came from, “We know that you are a teacher come from God.” And, Pilate, following his question, tried to dismiss this man called Christ, tried to play it safe, “I wash my hands of the blood of this man.”

I know many of you are pondering what exactly this story of Pilate’s question—an Easter question—has to do with our celebration of Advent. My answer to you is simple. Here today, on this first Sunday of Advent, we must again ask ourselves this ageless question, “What should I do with Jesus?” Each year as we begin this season of Advent, our thoughts, our prayers, our focus is directed at “preparation” for the coming of the Christ-Child at Christmas. Equally, we must, also, remember our preparation to meet this man Jesus at our own passing or upon His triumphant return. It is a time of Penance. It is a time of Joy.

Sacred Scripture outlines an answer to the question, for our time of preparation. I offer you four things—remember this simple acronym, BAAT: 1) We must first BELIEVE—believe in His incarnation—God in the flesh; 2) we must ACCEPT—accept that He “is the [only] way, the [one] truth, and the life [everlasting]”; 3) we must ALLOW Him to become the Lord and Master of our lives 4) we must come to TRUST—trust that everything He did, He did for us out of love. We cannot allow ourselves to take refuge in neutrality, as Pilate did, doing only the bare minimum in our spiritual lives.

As we begin again our preparation for Christ in this new season of Advent, as look then to the Easter season to come, each and every day, let us take time to again answer this question— *“What should I do with Jesus, who is called Messiah?”* When we have answered this question in our heart, we can and will become living witnesses to a world searching for something new, a world in need of this man, God incarnate, Jesus.