

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – November 29, 2020

WEEK 1 MESSAGE:

The Promise of Advent – Be watchful! Be alert!

Reading 1: Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:2-7

Reading 2: 1 Corin 1:3-9

Gospel of Mark: 13:33-37



Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent

Jesus said to his disciples: “Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come. It is like a man traveling abroad. He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

Message Introduction

Advent inspires us to be hopeful for the future. Advent tells us something special is about to happen. Prepare! Be watchful! Be alert! Journey with us in this season of peace, love, joy and hope for our December message series titled The Promise of Christmas – past, present and future.

Anticipation builds with the Gospels of Advent. The prophesy of Isaiah will be fulfilled. Mary’s yes will set into motion God’s plan to save the world. The child born in a manger will become the king on the cross. That’s the journey of faith that begins in Advent. The Promise of Christmas awaits.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

- **What does the “Promise of Christmas” mean to you?**
- **Christianity is full of promises.** Of them all, Christmas is perhaps the sweetest. We yearn for Christmas, we treasure Christmas past and we anticipate making new memories each Christmas. But we know this year things will be different. How can we hold on to the true promise of Christmas this year?
- **Be watchful! Be alert!**
 - Is there a waiting experience that you can especially recall? How did it play out?
 - At this time in your life, are you waiting for anything in particular?
 - What are you looking for that you would not want to miss?
 - What can help us as believers during this Advent Season to be more alert for the comings of Jesus in our lives?

LAUDATO SI' AND THE INCARNATION MYSTERY

“From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole.

- Laudato Si' p 99

Pope Francis asks us to delve into the MYSTERY of our creation. There is perhaps no better season to start than in this season. We heard this week in the homily message: Advent Scripture says raise your eyes a little ... look beyond your human circumstance, for something extraordinary is in your future. Lift your gaze to something higher.

- **Seen with the eyes of faith, the story of our universe and of our life on earth, is part of a larger story. As we prepare the way of the Lord and make straight our path – what “renewal” do you think Pope Francis is asking us to consider?**

“We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared by everyone ... A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.” (Laudato Si', p202)

LIVING THE GOSPEL – JOURNEY TO LIGHT

We are called to be the bearer of Christ's light this Advent. As we heard in the homily this weekend, *“Before there was anything created by the very hand of God, there was darkness...and out darkness, God drew all that was good, all that was holy.”*

Darkness can be a place of warmth and safety, or a place to stay alone, to remain unseen, to be lost. Through self-reflection, what “darkness” challenges you?

- To be bearers of the light, we first must see the light! Consider setting a goal (and a plan) for Advent by which you will journey through the darkness. For example:
 - Advent daily prayer (talk to God about your hopes, your fears, your wants, your needs, your blessings) (seek the intercessory of Mary, Mother of the Christ Child);
 - Intentional acts of self-sacrifice (be Christ to others; see Christ in others);
 - Penance (prepare your heart for the newborn king);
 - Mass (praise God and experience the joy of the Eucharist)

ADVENT PRAYER

*Lord, open my heart this Advent to hear your word.
Renew me, comfort me, strengthen my trust in you.
Help me to live in the promise of your faithful love,
for You are my hope, my light and my salvation.
Amen.*