

Homily for the 1st Sunday of Advent

Is. 63. 16-17, 19. 64.2-7, 1 Cor.1.3-9, Mark 13. 33-37

Today we begin Advent. Advent is a period of prayer in preparation for the Birth of Christ. A preparation time period in which we are called to take an active role in our preparation for Christmas, in our relationship with God the Father. The Church begins her new liturgical calendar today. This season of Advent we begin with a passage from the Gospel of Saint Mark in which Jesus speaks of His second coming.

Jesus tells the disciples to “be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.” Jesus reveals three key things in this short verse. To be watchful is a call for us to be aware of what is happening around us, yet as important is that there is a sense of urgency to be on our guard and to be on the lookout for the coming of Jesus.

To be alert is to be in a state of readiness. As a good athlete prepares for a competition, students’ study to prepare for the test and we should prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. Our preparedness is a matter of being in an activate relationship with God. Notice that Father and I are wearing purple today. This is a call or reminder to repent. Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we receive graces and right ourselves in our relationship with God thus preparing for Him.

Through the regular receipt of Sacraments we receive graces, through these graces we are preparing ourselves for the Second coming of Christ. Jesus tells us that we do not know the time when He will return, so don’t procrastinate!! Receive the Sacraments often! The CCC # 1014 states, “The Church encourages us to prepare ourselves for the hour of death.” To be prepared for our meeting with Jesus Christ.

In the next section of the Gospel Jesus states, “He leaves home and places his servants in charge...orders the gatekeeper to be on watch.” Jesus is describing the Church. Last week we celebrated Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. Jesus knew He was leaving earth to go be with His Father (as if He were on a long journey). We read in St. Matthew’s Gospel that Jesus had given Peter the keys to the Kingdom (Mt. 16.19). Jesus was leaving the keys or authority to Peter to be in charge of the church in His absence. The keys are symbolic as to who is in charge in the absence of the King (Jesus Christ), this absence and giving of the keys is

also mentioned in Isaiah 22.22. Today we hear Jesus tell the “gatekeeper” to be on watch. The gatekeeper is Peter. Peter and his successors are then directed or commanded to keep watch. Each of us has received our own gifts or task from the Lord. St. Paul tells us that some “should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and some teachers...” (Ephesians. 4.11-12). We need to use our talents to build and better the Church, so we are all prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus warns us to not be found “sleeping” He is referring to our falling asleep spiritually. We must avoid grave sin. We must fight to maintain our spiritual joy in our soul. We must be vigilant in prayer. In the CCC #2849 in speaking of the petitions of the Our Father, “And lead us not into temptation” says, “It is by his prayer that Jesus vanquishes the Tempter, and both at the outset of his public mission and in the ultimate struggle of his agony. In this petition to our heavenly Father, Christ invites us to his battle and agony. He urges us to vigilance of the heart in communion with his own...” The CCC then continues “The Holy Spirit constantly seeks to awaken us to keep watch.”

My friends Advent is but four weeks long, it will go fast. So today commit to an additional prayer time, to a daily examination of conscience, go to confession and receive the Eucharist. During this prayerful time, pray for one another so we all may be watchful and alert for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Remember Christmas is about His presence. May God Bless you this Advent Season.