

The First Sunday of Advent, Year - A
Isaiah 2: 1-5 || Romans 13: 11-14 || Mathew 24: 37-44
THE UNKNOWN HOUR

Synopsis:

The word “Advent” means, “coming.”

We need to open our hearts to receive Jesus with faith, hope, and love.

It is “the unknown hour.”

Let us put on the armor of light.

Let us pray, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

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Here is the three-sentence story about Advent.

“We have purple candles on our wreath.

Purple is the new Red.

Like a traffic light, it signals to STOP, wait, and pay attention!”

Advent is a time to wait, listen and ponder the awesome wonder of God who sent his only son as a baby to save us. In this season, let us pause a moment and spend some time reflecting on God’s gift of love. “At the beginning of this new liturgical yearly cycle, the liturgy invites the Church to renew her proclamation to all the peoples and sums it up in two words ‘God comes.’ The word “Advent” means, “coming.” In Advent, we celebrate the coming of Jesus, our Lord! We also commemorate His coming on various occasions, for example, his coming at Bethlehem two thousand years ago, his Second Coming at the end of the world, and his coming to us in time in our baptism and in the reception of his sacraments, such as the Holy Eucharist.

In this season of Advent, the Church urges us to open our hearts to receive Jesus with faith, hope, and love. Just as we prepare for guests who come for dinner, so also the Church invites us to prepare in a special way for the coming of Christ at Christmas time. By doing this, we prepare ourselves for his final coming, first at our death and then at his Second Coming at the end of the world.

The readings today speak about “the unknown hour.” This theme is explained in each reading and personified in different ways. For example, in the first reading as “the Light of the Lord,” in the responsorial as “the house of the Lord,” in the second reading as “the hour of the Lord,” and in the Gospel “the coming of the Lord.”

All these readings urge us to “stay awake,” to “be prepared” because we do not know the day or hour the Lord is coming. In a very true sense, we can say, “the Lord has come, the Lord is coming, and the Lord will come again.” It means that we need to thank him, need to welcome him, and need to wait for him.

In the first reading, Isaiah sees a bright future in the Messianic era. He sees all nations marching together in the eternal peace of God’s kingdom. He speaks of the future conversion of the nations

and the advent of God's peace. He invites us to walk in "the light of the Lord!" He says that truth and justice will go forth from Jerusalem to the entire world. This is an image of the Church today as the source of salvation for all mankind.

In the second reading, St. Paul tells us "Our salvation is near..." The day is at hand. The time has come; we must wake up now. Let us throw off the works of darkness. Let us put on the armor of light. Let us be ready to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel, the coming of our Lord Jesus requires our watchfulness. Any day, any moment could be the final coming of the Lord for us. The Second Coming of the Lord will be sudden and unexpected, like the flood in the time of Noah. Many people ignored the warnings and ridiculed him for building a big boat on dry land, far from the sea. But the flood came and destroyed them, while Noah survived with his family and animals.

The same thing will happen to all who do not follow the words of the Lord. But God's judgment is individual, not according to groups. "Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken and one will be left." That is, because of his preparation and watchfulness, one will be taken into the Church and saved, and the other will be lost. Therefore, we need to be "awake, we may not know the day our Lord is coming." His coming will slip quietly into the present, undetected like a thief in the night. He comes unexpectedly. So, we must always be ready for him. So, we need to be prepared, and watchful!

Finally, Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. How do we prepare ourselves? By fervent and daily prayer, by being faithful to our commitments and state in life, by practicing acts of self-denial, by carrying our cross daily, by kindness towards others - especially members of our family, by avoiding all evil doings and unjust criticism of others. Like the early Christians, let us pray, "Come, Lord Jesus; Come!"

Quote for further reflection:

"Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man." – Pope Francis

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern." – St. Mother Teresa

"Advent increases our hope, a hope which does not disappoint. The Lord never lets us down." – Pope Francis

"Advent, this powerful liturgical season that we are beginning, invites us to pause in silence to understand a presence. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us, signs of the attention he has for each one of us." – Pope Benedict XVI

Blessings!

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