

The 1st Sunday of Advent - Year A – 11/30/2025 – Msgr. Peter Quang Nguyen

First Reading – Isaiah 2:1-5: In the future, the Lord's mountain will be the highest. All nations will come to learn His ways, and there will be peace. Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 122: We rejoice as we enter Jerusalem, the unified city of the Lord. We pray for peace and prosperity in Jerusalem, and we give thanks to the Lord's name.

Second Reading – Romans 13:11-14: Wake up, for our salvation is near. Live properly, putting aside darkness and putting on the light of Jesus Christ.

Gospel – Matthew 24:37-44: Jesus warns that His coming will be sudden, like the days of Noah. People will be taken unexpectedly, so stay awake and be ready at all times.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

The Advent season is a time of **preparation** that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and to the anniversary of Our Lord's birth on Christmas. From the earliest days of the Church, people have been fascinated by Jesus' promise to come back.

But the scripture readings during Advent tell us not to waste our time with predictions. Advent is not about speculation. Our Advent readings call us to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world (Lk 21: 34-36). Advent also includes an element of penance in the sense of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas.

The 1st Sunday of Advent Year A is a time of waiting and hope. We look forward to Jesus coming again, and we remember His birth in Bethlehem. Advent reminds us to be ready, not just for Christmas, but for the day when Christ will return. It is a season to pray, watch, and live in the light of the Lord. Believing in the end of the world, that is, the day of the Lord's coming, is one of the core points of Christianity. Every day, during the Mass, believers profess after the consecration: *"We proclaim your death, Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again."*

"You come again." Jesus says that this divine reality does not come in an obvious way that can be observed. One thing is certain: there is an end to history, but no one, not even the saints, the angels, or even humans, knows about the time of the end of the world.

1. The unexpectedness of the coming day.

The Kingdom of God will be accomplished at a time that no one knows in advance, on the day of Jesus' coming. God has indeed placed in the hearts of men the seed of eternal life, a seed that can only germinate in the soil of the present: one cannot enter eternity without passing through the present, one cannot love eternity while rejecting the present.

The unexpectedness of the Coming Day requires believers to be always alert. Alertness means to be actively engaged in the present moment, not to sit around and wait.

Jesus used the story in the Old Testament to warn of the unexpectedness of a very great event that will certainly happen. That is the eschatological event, the Lord will come finally to reveal the meaning of all creation. And to illustrate the unexpectedness of the end of the world, Jesus used a specific event in the Old Testament, the Great Flood of Noah's time, to invite people to be ready for that day.

The end of the world will come suddenly and quickly, and death will come to each person unexpectedly. Therefore, we must always be vigilant, pray, and prepare our spiritual luggage by doing good deeds, so that when the Lord comes, He will find us faithful and wise servants, and the kingdom of God will belong to those who persevere to the end.

2. A definitive distinction.

The end of the world, when the final judgment takes place. That is when God's plan is completed, the day when each person faces his most essential problem: to be saved or not to be saved: *"Who will be taken and who will be left behind?"*

Two people do the same job, but one is taken and the other is left behind. That is, at this time, people in the same situation will treat each other in opposite ways. In this context, the distinction between them is not based on this or that position, nor is there any profession that guarantees salvation, nor is there any priority for the religious or lay people, but will be saved based on how ready they are to welcome the Lord's coming. The day the good will be rewarded and the evil will be destroyed.

Therefore, each person is invited to live in a state of readiness to welcome the Lord's coming, while still dedicating themselves to building a good world according to God's will. Being ready to face the day of the Lord's coming is not about hoarding candles or food to cope (because it is useless), but about preparing a pure soul to be worthy of the day the Righteous King comes. With a sense of responsibility and a spirit of selfless service, Christians always commit themselves to every corner of life and bear witness to the Gospel by fulfilling their duties, by living out their responsibilities to others and in a spirit of selfless service. Only then will they be worthy of God's reward. Let us remember three keys to help us prepare the Coming Christ into our lives and be-with-us always.

1. Be Awake

Saint Paul advises: *"Live properly as in the day..., not according to the flesh to gratify its lusts"* (Rm 13:13,14).

2. Correct the path, prepare the way, adjust your life (no drunkenness, no debauchery, no quarreling and jealousy ...). As we have introduced above, the process of Repentance - Preparation in Advent is to Prepare the Way, which is purification.

3. Rejoice because you are about to meet the Child Jesus (put on Jesus Christ).

Lord Jesus, our future life is woven from what we have said and done in this world. Please let us, while heading towards our heavenly homeland, also know how to fulfill our duties and responsibilities as children of God in this earthly pilgrimage, so that when You come, we can join You in enjoying eternal happiness. Amen.