

## **Advent Sunday Year A 27 November 2016**

**Readings:** *Isaiah 2:1-5, Romans 13:11-14, Matthew 24:36-44 Ps 122*

### **Theme: Be ready for the coming of the Lord**

“Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming”  
In the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit amen

My dear friends, the above quotation from the Gospel we have just read is an advice to you and I to be ready for the coming of the Lord.

Once more it is Advent. It is the beginning of the new liturgical year. The church wants us to reflect on our Christian life so far and once more gives us the opportunity of a fresh start. All the readings we have heard this morning summon us to be alert, to turn away from our sins and be ready for the coming of the Lord.

In the first reading the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the day in future; the day of the Lord when the Lord himself will be made manifest and stand high as on the mountain. All will come to acknowledge him. He will judge the nations according to their deeds. So in the midst of denouncing sin especially social sin as vehemently as Amos, he manages to sustain hope in the heart of his hearers. He paints an inspiring picture of what God has in store, justice between nations, an end to wasteful war, and the prosperity which must follow when people turn their energies to cultivating the earth. Hence to the people he says, wake up

In the second reading, Paul in his letter to the Romans reminds them of the need to remain awake because the time of salvation is at hand. He urged the people of God to lay aside all the things that have militated against the Christian life. Christians should now begin a new life worthy of Christ and put on the armour of Christ because the day of the Lord is at hand. Here the stress is on remaining awake

In the Gospel, Jesus in answer to the question about the time of the coming of the Lord, the day of judgement, warns his followers about the need to be ready to meet the Lord. Readiness is of the essence for the day will be sudden. Today, on this first Sunday of advent, the church is asking you and I to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Again the emphasis is on standing ready. What does it mean to us and how do we get ourselves ready?

We tend to see Advent as a past event, recalling the birth of Christ but if we fail to move forward from the starting point, to Christ coming in glory, our Christmas celebration will be out of focus. Like all liturgical celebration, a proper celebration of Advent recalls the past, celebrates the present and looks forward to the future coming of Christ with joyful hope and confidence. At this time of the year, we are invited to look at our world with the eyes of faith and realise that God has a plan and a vision for all of us.

The readings present us with a challenge, to look at life and to begin living with a new perspective. In keeping with the seasons' note of expectation, they focus our attention

on the breaking of God into human history. From the time of Jesus, nothing was ever the same again. Often we hear many atheist rubbishing Christianity and all that it stands for, and yet not a day passes that life does not remind them of that great event of God breaking into human history. Isaiah's vision of a new future echoes in our hearts as he looks forward with hope and expectation to the glorious times. He dreams of swords being cast into ploughshares, of unity among the nations and all the people walking together in the peace of the Lord, who is calling us back home. This is an invitation addressed to each and every one of us. Paul encourages us to lead good lives as the dawn of salvation is near. No wonder Jesus warns in the Gospel of the need to be ready. Since the time and the date is not known, it is important to get ready here and now and not be caught idly napping in careless disregard for God as were people in Noah's day who were swept away in the great flood. Things happen when we least expect.

The main thrust of the message is to be vigilant, to rectify our way of life, and to admit the need to make a Christian contribution and have a proper lifestyle. This means that we have to 'throw away our deeds of darkness'... 'to put on the amour' of faith, hope and charity and work for peace and justice in the world. We need therefore to build bridges between people through strengthening our relationships with one another, by taking initiatives to forgive, by loving the alienated and by reaching out to the disadvantaged.

A useful reminder of something we would rather forget; is that the Gospel tradition which tells us that each one of us after death comes face to face in judgement with our God. On that occasion, we will be alone and held personally accountable for our lives. The Gospel warns us against being lulled into a false sense of security.

Advent is a joyful celebration of the condition we find ourselves as Christians. It announces that God is always moving towards us. He is at work in the world and in our lives ever creative and ever and ever renewing. The good news is that we are pilgrims on the move and are going home to God's house. The only worthwhile baggage to carry in that journey is our good works and acts of loving service performed for Christ. The liturgy invites us to allow this future hope to shape our present lives

Advent is a time to take stock. A time to examine our lives so far and make amends today. Let us ask God to give us the strength to prepare for the coming of His son.

In the Name.....

...