



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



First Sunday of Advent, Cycle A

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"Keep awake for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:42

Advent means "coming" or "arrival." We hear this in today's Gospel account from Matthew. *"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."* In this first week of Advent we look back on the prophecies of the Old Testament, to give us proper perspective, so that we can look forward. In Luke 20:24 *Jesus said, "Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and psalms had to be fulfilled."* The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old is illuminated in the New. Indeed, Christ is coeternal with the Father and is at the center and is the fullness of the whole of Scripture, Old and New.

In an intimate moment with the twelve, Jesus explains at length what the end of time will be like. Jesus teaching is that of a coming but not-yet-arrived cosmic event, with the emphasis on readiness, on being prepared. To be prepared he has us consider the contrast in his story that makes the difference between the two in the field or two women. The difference is that one exhibits inner vigilance at the level of prayerful mindfulness and intentional awareness. In this posture of intentional awareness we prepare interiorly for that which is coming but not yet arrived in our every day. Otherwise it is easy to get caught up in the flow of day-to-day mindless activities and become forgetful of the truly important things in life. It happened in Noah's time and it happens in ours. Jesus is not counseling that people should live in fear and dread; rather, people are to live in hopeful expectation, alert to the signs of God's loving plan to draw the world together.

This is our invitation to experience the fullness of human life through Christ. In this mystery, we take on the sacred heart of Jesus where Christ becomes eternally present through the Mystical Body of Christ to the world, permeating divine activity into the fabric of all that we do and all that we have.

As you reflect on this reading, and the over arching shape of Advent, seek interior illumination of this Advent Hope. In the ancient tradition and symbolism of the lighting of the first candle of the Advent Wreath, the candle of hope, be assured that we can dwell peacefully in the hope that God will fulfill the prophecies declared in the Old Testament.

We can profit from the lessons of the past; we know what it means to stay awake and not get caught off guard. It means being ready for the many ways that God's love pierces through the dark, inbreaking into the world.

Christ our light, we await you as we hold the candle of hope in an otherwise darkened world of disbelief. Inspire our Community to sing your praise as we prepare in this Advent Season to greet your return with joyful hearts.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According To Matthew

Jesus spoke to his disciples:

*"As the days of Noah were,
so will be the coming of the Son of Man.
For as in those days before the flood
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
until the day Noah entered the ark,
and they knew nothing
until the flood came and swept them all away,
so too will be the coming of the Son of Man."*

*"Then two will be in the field;
one will be taken and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding meal together;
one will be taken and one will be left."*

*"Keep awake, therefore,
for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.
But understand this:
if the owner of the house had known
in what part of the night the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and would not have let his house be broken into.
Therefore you also must be ready,
for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."*

The Gospel of the Lord

