



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**1st Sunday of Advent
November 30th 2025**

Theme: "Stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming."

Gathering Prayer

All: Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at his coming, so that, gathered at his right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 24:37-44

³⁷ 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. ³⁸ For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, ³⁹ and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes.

⁴⁰ Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; ⁴¹ of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

⁴² 'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. ⁴³ You may be quite sure of this that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house.

⁴⁴ Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Gospel Reflection

Today's second and third readings want us to move to red alert. Paul says it is time to wake from sleep. The gospel warns us to stay awake and not be caught unaware. The images of what happens to those who are unprepared sound frightening: a thief in the night breaks in; one man in the field is taken and the other one left; one woman grinding at the mill is taken and the other one left. "Be prepared," Jesus warns.

As we enter into Advent once again, we are not preparing for the coming of the Christ Child; that already happened more than two thousand years ago, Rather, in Advent, we break our normal routine and move into heightened alert to perceive more intensely the ways in which Emmanuel, God-with-us, is moving us toward that vision of peace and unity that Isaiah so eloquently describes in the first reading. The prophet dreams of how all people stream toward the city of peace, all dwell in unity, swords are beaten into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks, and there is no more training for war again.

In the second reading Paul gives concrete advice about how we might do this intense preparation for the coming fullness of the peaceable kingdom. Paul exhorts Christians to “throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” He recognizes that the peace of which Isaiah dreamed, and which the coming of Christ brought about in the new way, does not come without a struggle. It takes more than just wishing and longing to make it a reality. He imagines Christians going into battle, metaphorically speaking.

To prepare for the struggle, Paul would have us polish up our body armor of virtues. He speaks of the kind of training one must undergo to be able to be the bearer of light. He warns against excesses and indulgences that make one sated and sluggish. Instead, traditionally practices of prayer and fasting can hollow out inner space to tend the light we are asked to bear.

The readings for this Sunday urge us to go beyond defensive preparations. Reading ourselves for the full expression of the peaceable kingdom also entails initiating nonviolent action to dismantle weapons of war and transform whatever there may be in our hearts that is not yet able to wage peace.

The gospel today impresses upon us the urgency of engaging in the struggles for peace. The images of the unprepared ones whose homes are broken into or who are left behind are not meant to frighten us, but they remind us that there will be an end-time when all our preparations, all our attempts to be alert, and all our efforts to disarm our hearts and wage peace will, in a critical moment, reach fruition. And we will be ready.

Living Liturgy

We embark today upon a new liturgical year, and we open it by celebrating the season of Advent. Thanks to Advent, we begin our year in a spirit of deep and bracing hope, for the Advent liturgy is a liturgy of hope. What the church offers us and invites us to embrace at the beginning of each liturgical year is a spirituality of hope.

The word hope has a very general meaning of course that can be watered down almost to nothing. “I hope I get a raise at work.” “I hope it doesn’t snow today.” But *hope* has a rich and important theological meaning, Christian hope is centered on God, on God’s kingdom, and on God’s promises of justice, and salvation. It means trusting in those promises even when all evidence points to the contrary.

A spirituality of hope is marked by joy, because of the strange reality that we already possess, as a foretaste anyway, what we await. It is no accident, then, that one of the four Advent Sundays-Gaudete Sunday-is dedicated to joy.

But a spirituality of hope is also difficult, because it calls us to conversion, as Advent figures like Isaiah and John the Baptist make clear. Holding on to our sinful habits, and the begrudging attitudes we use to justify them, are failures of hope.

Finally, Christian hope is not passive. It’s not about sitting around waiting for God to “do his thing” after our time on earth, or earth’s own time, has run out! The God of Advent is a God who had intervened already in history and continues to do so. Our experience of the final judgment, for which Advent calls us to prepare, will be-as Jesus tells us in a passage that will be our gospel reading on the *final* Sunday of this new liturgical year-determined by whether and how we engaged in our world, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick.

New Testament links

First Reading — Is 2:1-5

¹ The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² In the days to come the mountain of the Temple of Yahweh shall tower above the mountains and be lifted higher than the hills. All the nations will stream to it, ³ peoples without number will

come to it; and they will say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the Temple of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths; since the Law will go out from Zion, and the oracle of Yahweh from Jerusalem'.

⁴ He will wield authority over the nations and adjudicate between many peoples; these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war. ⁵ House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of Yahweh.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

R: How I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of Yahweh.

How I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of Yahweh!'
And now our feet are standing in your gateways, Jerusalem. **(R)**

Jerusalem restored! The city, one united whole!
Here the tribes come up, the tribes of Yahweh. **(R)**

They come to praise Yahweh's name, as he ordered Israel,
here where the tribunals of justice are, the royal tribunals of David. **(R)**

Pray for peace in Jerusalem, 'Prosperity to your houses!
Peace inside your city walls! Prosperity to your palaces!' **(R)**

Since all are my brothers and friends, I say 'Peace be with you!'
Since Yahweh our God lives here, I pray for your happiness. **(R)**

Second Reading — Rom 13:11-14

¹¹ Besides, you know 'the time' has come: you must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted. ¹² The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon – let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light. ¹³ Let us live decently as people do in the daytime: no drunken orgies, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. ¹⁴ Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ; forget about satisfying your bodies with all their cravings.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

673. Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent, even though "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are "delayed".

Sharing and Discussion

1. In the ordinary rhythms of my daily life—eating, working, planning—how attentive am I to God's quiet movements and invitations?
2. What does "staying awake" mean for me spiritually? In which areas of my life have I grown spiritually drowsy or complacent?

3. If the Lord were to come today—into my home, my heart, my decisions—what would He find, and what would I desire to offer Him?

Closing Prayer

All: Loving God, hear these prayers we raise today and answer them accordingly to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen