

First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 2: 1- 5 Romans 13: 11- 14 Matthew 24: 37- 44

December 1, 2013

When I worked at Saginaw Steering Gear one of my responsibilities was to manage the Y2k or Year 2000 project. It was a lot of hard work to inventory all of the hardware and software programs and make the necessary changes to prevent problems with the transition to the 21st century. In the end we properly prepared since there were only minor issues as the new year arrived. Yet there were two extreme approaches with which people approached this phenomena. One was being fixated on all the bad things that could happen. Some people focused on it night and day, building bunkers, purchasing supplies, stopping everything else. Their entire lives were absorbed. The other extreme was doing no preparation at all. With all of the stern warnings very few businesses took this approach

In the Gospel today we are reminded, "So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." We are all going about our normal activities called living. In the midst of all of this we are commanded to be prepared. This means to have the Lord as #1 in our hearts, to keep his commandments, to know our faith inside and out. . With the Y2k we knew when it was coming. We did not have to wonder. ***But with the Day of the Lord it is another matter.*** It is not a matter of if it will come, but when. Of course, there are two unhealthy extremes. One is to focus totally on the end times, always looking for signs, always wondering whether it is today or tomorrow, reading literature and listening to those who say that this day or that day is when it will happen. There are not many but we have friends who remind us every time we get with them that the time is very near. The difference between this and something like Y2k is that we do not know when the hour is coming. Not even Jesus was let in on when this day of the Lord would occur. We are left to wonder. ***The other extreme is to be unprepared. Most of us could identify with this camp. Despite the stern warnings and consequences we shrug it off. However, when the day of the Lord occurs it may be too late to build an ark for our salvation, too late to fortify our faith. We will not have done the hard***

work, the discipline, obtaining the knowledge, making the necessary daily decisions, and changing our hearts that are the required ingredients of being prepared. After all, we say there is always tomorrow. We are like those before the flood. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, marriage as if we had all of the time in the world. What gives? The end result is clear. Be prepared or else!

And it is not because we are lazy. We always see people scurrying around, especially during this upcoming season. So many things to do and so little time. It may be that we do not have the right priorities. What do we consider important?? And then it may be that we are influenced by three common attitudes with which our culture saturates us. **The first is, “what’s in it for me.”** This comes from a sense of individualism. What I do and what I need are the most important. Everything else is secondary. So if I cannot see how being prepared is going to help me, so be it. I do not get anything out of mass when I go. **The second is, “if it feels good do it.”** How many times have we heard people express that opinion? We do what we like instead of what we need to do. We do what gives us pleasure rather than being disciplined. I would rather play on my iPad than pray or read the bible. I would rather go to the movies or watch the Sunday game rather than read an inspiring book. The third is, **“What is the least I can do?”** How little can I get away with? What is the minimum number of times that I need to go to confession or receive communion every year? How many absences can my child have in school before they are disciplined? How far over the speed limit can I go before I get a ticket? **Along with lack of priorities these three attitudes are dangerous and need to be avoided to keep us from being trapped. We look for opportunities to say, “what’s in for us”, if it is good for us do it, and, “what else can I do” to serve the Lord this Advent.**

So as we begin Advent this weekend we are challenged and commanded to be ready. We must be like the Boy Scouts. So during Advent, with peace, love, joy and hope we receive the Lord into our hearts this Christmas knowing that we will continually prepare for the ultimate coming of the Lord.

First Sunday of Advent

Lectionary: 1

Reading **1IS 2:1-5**

This is what Isaiah, son of Amoz,
saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
In days to come,
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest mountain
and raised above the hills.
All nations shall stream toward it;
many peoples shall come and say:
"Come, let us climb the LORD's mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may instruct us in his ways,
and we may walk in his paths."
For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and impose terms on many peoples.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;
one nation shall not raise the sword against another,
nor shall they train for war again.
O house of Jacob, come,
let us walk in the light of the Lord!

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

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."

And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.

To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

May those who love you prosper!
May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.
Because of my brothers and friends
I will say, "Peace be within you!"
Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will pray for your good.
R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Reading 2 **ROM 13:11-14**

Brothers and sisters:
You know the time;
it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep.
For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed;
the night is advanced, the day is at hand.
Let us then throw off the works of darkness
and put on the armor of light;
let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day,
not in orgies and drunkenness,
not in promiscuity and lust,
not in rivalry and jealousy.
But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,
and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Alleluia **CF. PS 85:8**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Show us Lord, your love;
and grant us your salvation.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel **MT 24:37-44**

Jesus said to his disciples:
"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.
In those days before the flood,
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marriage,
up to the day that Noah entered the ark.
They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away.
So will it be also at the coming of the Son of Man.
Two men will be out in the field;
one will be taken, and one will be left.
Two women will be grinding at the mill;
one will be taken, and one will be left.

Therefore, stay awake!
For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.
Be sure of this: if the master of the house
had known the hour of night when the thief was coming,
he would have stayed awake
and not let his house be broken into.
So too, you also must be prepared,
for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”