

DECEMBER 1, 2019  
Sunday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Advent  
Matthew 24: 37-44

BE PREPARED

Today we are celebrating the first Sunday of Advent, the start of the Church's new liturgical year. The term Advent comes from the Latin prefix 'ad' meaning 'to' and the root word 'venire' meaning 'come', so Advent means 'to come', and the English word is derived from the Latin 'adventus' meaning 'to arrive'. For us Christians, and Catholics in particular, it means anticipating the Lord's coming. During this season, we anticipate and prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus as the Savior, the Messiah, who was born in Bethlehem to a Virgin named Mary. We await the Birth of Jesus. Also, we are anticipating the coming of Jesus as Judge and Ruler of heaven and earth, that is His Second Coming.

According to General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLY) of 1969 found in the Ordo an annual calendar containing abbreviated directions for each day's Mass and Divine Office<sup>1</sup>, "Advent has a twofold nature: it prepares us for Christmas, when we recall Christ's first coming among us, and it is also a time when we look forward to His coming at the end of the ages. Advent is a season of joyful expectation."<sup>2</sup> This is a four-week preparation leading to Christmas celebration.

For Pope Francis, Advent is a time of waiting and expectation, but this season also requires a journey of conversion. To prepare the way for the Lord who comes, it is necessary to take into account the demands of conversion. Conversion requires changing your attitude. It leads to humbly recognizing our mistakes, our infidelities, and defaults.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org)

<sup>2</sup> Ordo, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2019-2020

<sup>3</sup> Catholic Online

Our gospel for today is focusing on the word: “Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming”, a call to all of us Christians. The evangelist is admonishing us stay awake. We need to be prepared every day in every way. We don’t know what will happen to us tomorrow. We don’t know what is tomorrow. Look what happened to those people in Noah’s time: they are unprepared and unconcerned. These people were not ready in the days before the flood because they were too busy with their lives to be concerned about God's will and his Way. The gospel does not mention that these people were evil prior to the flood, it just says that they were unconcerned.

We still encounter these people in our midst. People who do not worship are not just unchurched; they are unconcerned. They just don't care about God, His existence and love, or their responsibility to honor Him not just in a Church but in their everyday life. During this Season of Advent, this is our mission: we pray for these people. We pray that they will be touched by the grace and spirit of Christmas and join us on Christmas Day. Then, when they responded and we are blessed with their presence, we need to accept, embrace and welcome them. We need to let all our visitors or people who come to Church once or twice a year, during Easter and Christmas, we need to let them know that we cherish and treasure their presence with us. My brothers and sisters, that is doing the work of the Kingdom because we know that Jesus Christ became Man for us sinners and for those who are lost, unchurched and unconcerned.

On September 11, 2001, 3,000 people intended to return to their homes from the World Trade Center in New York City. None of them made it. In 2007, 560 people lost their lives in an earthquake that came without warning in Peru. Jesus warns us six times in the Gospels that we do not know what day or hour He is coming for us. This is a reminder for all of us. We need to be prepared and the best way to do it is to ask forgiveness from the Lord every day, doing the will of God in every way, every day and be

an instrument of sharing and love to others especially to those who are in need, homeless, depressed, unloved and spiritually poor.

My brothers and sisters, how do you prepare for the coming of the Lord? What are your plans this Season of Advent? As you decorate your house, are you also decorating your heart and souls with love, forgiveness and acceptance? What will be your gift to Jesus on His birthday? Let us ask the Lord in this Eucharist to give us the grace to cleanse our heart, mind and soul for us to be watchful and ready for His coming.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me to be strong in faith, unwavering in hope, and generous in love that I may seek to please you in all things. Keep me to be watchful for the coming of your kingdom today and every day of my life. Amen."