

NOVEMBER 28, 2021
Sunday of the 1st Week of Advent
Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

“KEEPING MY EYES FIXED ON HIM.”

“There’s a great story about Saint Francis of Assisi. One winter night, there was a raging blizzard, and the man who was supposed to wake up every couple of hours and keep the fire going at the monastery was unable to find Francis. So he went outside into the storm and found him kneeling at the side of a hill wearing his ordinary clothing. His arms were outstretched; he was praying, oblivious to the wind and biting cold snow. A day later, when the man asked Francis how he could stand this, Francis replied, ‘God warms my heart when I keep my eyes fixed on Him.’ God warms our hearts, too, when we keep our eyes fixed on God.”¹

Every year during the Season of Advent, we prepare ourselves for the birth of the Messiah, the Word became flesh, Jesus’ first coming. We are called to be alert and awake. In our second reading, St. Paul reminded us through the First Letter to the Thessalonians, “And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”² Love will prepare us for the coming of the Lord. When we are full of love, we share and express that to others by serving, offering and sharing what we have even our own selves for others.

“The First Reading from the prophet Jeremiah refers prophetically to the coming of Jesus, our King and Saviour: ‘I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David, who shall practise honesty and integrity in the land.’ That is the coming of the Child Jesus in Bethlehem, which we anticipate and prepare for in these four weeks. That is what we

¹ stories4homilies.blogspot.com

² 1 Thessalonians 3: 12-13 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

may call the First Coming. The Gospel speaks in ominous terms of the end of the world and what we refer to as the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of time. 'And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.' However, there is still a third coming which forms an important and indispensable link between the First and Second Comings. That is what is spoken about in the Second Reading. It is the welcoming of Jesus into our lives in the here and now. This is something which takes place every day. By it we both acknowledge the First Coming of Jesus in Bethlehem and prepare for the Second Coming at an unknown future date."³

Love is the key and guiding principle of Jesus in His service and giving His life for us. So, love will be and always be the key of being prepared and awake. We will never be cold, indifferent and unaware if our hearts are full of love of God and ourselves will be doing what love is, that is, helping and giving of what we have today and everyday. My brothers and sisters, what will be the concrete suggestions of our readings for today? What we need to do as we prepare ourselves for Christ's coming? "In the journey of life, today's Mass suggests that if we want to celebrate the First Coming of Jesus and prepare for his Second Coming, then the way to do it is to be aware of his coming into every moment of every day. The Scripture for today tells us that on the bus of life we should:

1. Be ready to get off the bus at any point, that is, be ready to meet the Lord whenever he calls us to himself, whether that be in the very near future or many years away. The important thing is: Be prepared.
2. Do not be afraid, do not worry. Fear, worry and anxiety do not solve any problems. Fear, worry and anxiety are about things which do not yet exist and most probably will never exist as we imagine them. As Fr. Tony de Mello used to say: 'Why worry? If you worry, you will die; if you don't worry, you will die. So why worry?'
3. Improve our relations with the people around us. A good life consists not so much in the kind of work we do or how 'successful' we are but how we have related with other people – with family, other relatives, friends, colleagues and total strangers."⁴

³ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

⁴ *ibid*

My brothers and sisters, let us always be aware that the Lord is here and now, meet Him through our brothers and sisters with love and humility and always warm our hearts by keeping our eyes fixed on Him. If we do that, we are prepared.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ , may I always warm my hearts by keeping my eyes fixed on you and may I never lose sight of the signs of your presence in my life and your love in the world today. Help and free me from spiritual coldness, indifference, and every disturbance and anxiety that would keep me away from you. May I always be at the service of others and never be exhausted in listening to your word, seeking you in prayer, and preparing myself for your coming in glory today and in the future. Amen.”