

**Mt 24:37-44; Isa 2:1-5; Rom 13:11-14 First Sunday of Advent 2025**

Christmas begins with the hustle and bustle, coming and going, searching for gifts in crowded stores. And if you want a taste of a real lack of Christian charity, try finding a space in the Costco parking lot!

But for us, Christmas is about a differing kind of coming and going. It's about God coming to us and us going to God. God living for us and us living for God...in Jesus Christ.

Welcome to advent. Now is the time we prepare, in fact we long for it...for the coming of God into the world.

Like the first reading said, it begins with an invitation to come to God: *Come, let us climb the Lord's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob* (Isa 2:3).

As you know, the house (or temple) of God is really Jesus Christ. So we are invited to come to Jesus: *that he may instruct us in his ways and we may walk in his paths* (Isa 2:3).

Because like Jesus said, *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me* (Jn 14:6).

Advent is about God coming to us and us coming to God. God living for us in Jesus and us living for God in Jesus.

So, Jesus says: Stay awake and be prepared! *For at an hour you do not expect [like a thief in the night], the Son of Man will come* (Mt 24:44), to bring us home with Him into heaven.

At the second coming there will be a final judgment--where the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life will be revealed (CCC 1038-1039). Some will go to heaven. Some will go to hell.

But before that, at the moment of our death, there will be a "particular" judgment. Some will go straight into heaven, some will go into purgatory then into heaven, and some will go straight into everlasting damnation (CCC 1022).

So stay awake and be prepared. But how? In the second reading St. Paul said, *throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light* (Rom 13:12).

He explains, *let us conduct ourselves properly as in the day, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy* (Rom 13:13). *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom 13:14).

How do we *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*? By doing what God did for us. God lived for us in Jesus Christ. Now it is our turn to live for God in Jesus Christ!

To begin, let's purify our hearts. Let's purify our hearts from venial sins when we come to mass and consume the Holy Eucharist. And let's purify our hearts from mortal sins by regular confession.

Then let's live in the light of Jesus Christ, even if we sometimes prefer the darkness.

We have met the enemy. And the enemy is not so much Satan as it is us, our pride and our self-love which lead us to sin.

So let's put on the armor of light (Rom 13:12)...Our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 13:14). And let's fight against the 7 deadly sins by living the 7 virtues of Jesus Christ.

Chastity overcomes the sin of lust. By His love and devotion to God, Jesus overcame all temptations including lust. Fulfilling God's will was always more important than succumbing to human desires.

Generosity overcomes the sin of greed. Jesus showed us His generosity when He turned water into wine, when He fed the 5,000, when He healed the sick, and his teachings were especially about helping the poor.

Temperance overcomes the sin of gluttony. When Jesus was tempted in the desert to turn a stone into bread, He refused.

Because the gifts God has given us are to be used to serve God and others, but not to serve ourselves.

Kindness overcomes the sin of envy. Jesus offered love, kindness, and understanding to everyone, especially the poor, the suffering...healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and forgiving the woman caught in adultery.

Meekness overcomes the sin of anger. Jesus invited us to, *learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29).

Then He showed us when He washed the disciples' feet. And then He endured His agony, suffering, and death on that cross just for us!

Humility overcomes the sin of pride. *[Jesus] though he was in the form of God,...emptied himself...coming in human likeness...he humbled himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross* (Phil 2:6-8).

Because: *the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as ransom for many* (Mt 20:28).

And diligence overcomes the sin of pride. Even when Jesus was betrayed, denied, abandoned, and in agony, He did not come down from that cross. He persevered to complete the work of our redemption.

The key is this: Pray for these virtues, and act like you already have them. Push yourself to do them over and over again until they become a part of who you are.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ prepare us and empower us this Advent for Your coming to us and our coming to You, your living for us and our living for you!

Because, *[we] live, no longer [us], but [You Jesus Christ] [live now and forever] in [us]* (Gal 2:20)!