

You Also Must Be Prepared

First Sunday of Advent – November 27, 2016- Matthew 24: 37-44

We begin a new liturgical year today. As with every Advent, the focus for the next four weeks is on our spiritual preparation for both the coming of Jesus anew into our hearts on Christmas, as well as the preparation needed for the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time.

Images of destruction, devastation and catastrophe are the stuff of which movies are made. The Book of Daniel and Revelation are full of symbolic images of the struggle between good and evil. The fear element can grow in response to the impending Armageddon theme. Throughout both Old and New Testaments, prophets and evangelists have warned God's people of what is to come at the end of time.

It is Jesus himself who has, over the last few weeks, warned against the fear. He heralds a different theme which is one of preparedness. In fact, in today's gospel Jesus reaffirms that we do not and cannot know the day or hour when this will happen anymore than we can predict our own death. **"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.'"**

We recently witnessed the pride in the preparedness for the recent flooding in Cedar Rapids. We all breathed a sigh of relief that we had survived far better than the 2008 flood. Knowledge, experience, planning and perseverance allowed the people of Cedar Rapids to coordinate and implement and survive another serious threat to life and property. People were prepared. Jesus wants the same preparedness for the end of the world, for our own personal death. **"So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."**

Every Advent we enter into this penitential time of taking an assessment of our lives. We all have some work to do. I know that I do. I get into bad habits. I get lazy about my prayer life and my faith. This is the time to begin a preparedness plan. How will this year be different? How can I be ready when my day of reckoning comes?

The answer lies within the basic elements of our faith which include a call to worship God each week at Mass, to offer prayer to God each day, to celebrate the sacraments regularly and to be aware that God loves and forgives us beyond all telling. In practicing our faith, we can be prepared for an eternal life with God no matter the day or the time.

Happy Advent!


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