

First Sunday of Advent



This Sunday marks the First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of a new liturgical year. Advent always invites us to begin again, to open our hearts with hope, and to prepare for the quiet arrival of Christ. Yet the Gospel for this Sunday begins not with soft anticipation, but with a startling call to spiritual awareness (Matthew 24:37, 42):

*Jesus says to His disciples:
"As it was in the days of Noah,
so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man...
Therefore, stay awake!
For you do not know on which day your Lord will
come."*

Jesus is not trying to frighten us but to awaken us. Before recovery, many of us lived spiritually asleep—lost in compulsions, anxieties, resentments, or self-will. We drifted through life unaware of God's presence or uninterested in His direction. Advent calls us back to attention. It invites us to pause, breathe, and pay attention to what truly matters.

Jesus continues with another image (Matthew 24:43–44):

*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.*

For people in recovery, this message is familiar. Complacency can be dangerous. When we let our guard down or fail to maintain our spiritual condition, old patterns return quickly. We know how easy it is to swap one addiction for another or return to self-destructive habits when we stop paying attention. Advent reminds us that vigilance is not fear—it is love expressed through intention and awareness.

Many of us had to watch the collapse of our own personal kingdoms before we became willing to seek the Kingdom of God. In the Steps, this is called a spiritual awakening. When we admitted our powerlessness and began surrendering our lives to a Higher Power, God stepped into the ruins and began rebuilding us. Only then did we realize how deeply He longed to meet us.

Saint Paul speaks to this awakening in Sunday's second reading (Romans 13:11–14):

*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.*

Paul reminds us that God meets us in the present moment—not in our past failures or future fears. Recovery and Advent share this same truth: today is the day of salvation. Today is the day to begin again. Today is the day to stay awake and make space for God.

The Twelve Steps help us do this by keeping us grounded in humility, honesty, and service. They train us to “put on the armor of light” through prayer, self-examination, amends, and a daily commitment to God’s will. The Power that restores us is the same One we seek as our Daily Bread—steady, faithful, and enduring.

Advent invites us to shift our attention from the chaos of the world to the quiet arrival of Christ in our lives. We wait with hope and patience, trusting that His presence will sustain us in all circumstances. As the Serenity Prayer teaches, God offers us reasonable happiness now and perfect happiness with Him forever.

May this Advent awaken our hearts, renew our hope, and prepare us to welcome Christ—who comes gently, steadily, and faithfully—into every part of our lives.

Reflection Questions

- How have chaos and the collapse of your own personal kingdom brought you closer to God?
- How do you apply 12-step principles to keep from substituting one compulsive behavior with another?
- How will you spiritually prepare for the coming of the Lord this Advent?

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A Thanksgiving Message of Hope

During this season of gratitude, we thank God for the gift of recovery and the grace that meets us each day. We give thanks for those who walk beside us, for the courage to grow, and for the hope that gently restores our hearts. May gratitude deepen our trust in God's care and strengthen our desire to serve others. With thankful hearts, we continue forward one day at a time.

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11

Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44