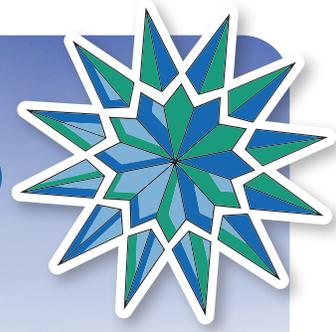


ALL SAINTS

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL



Love God • Serve Others • Form Disciples

November 29 & November 30, 2025;

First Sunday of Advent



Father Eric's Homily

BEING VIGILANT FOR THE LORD'S COMING

Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

Advent is a time of hopeful waiting and preparation. It is a time for the preparation for the Lord's coming. It has two-fold character: 1) Anticipation of the second coming of Christ (the Parousia), and 2) a remembrance of the coming of Christ as a newborn baby at Christmas. In view of this, the reading from the first Sunday of Advent to December 16 draw our attention to the second coming of Christ, while the readings from December 17 to December 24 direct our thoughts to the first coming of Christ, that is, his birth. Thus, Advent is a time not only for preparation for Christmas, but also a time of preparation for the second coming of Christ. In between these two comings, Christ comes in our midst every day, every moment. We must therefore live our lives as people always ready for the arrival of their Master. Indeed, every day of our life, whether in a period of advent or not, should be a preparation for the second coming of Christ. This is precisely what today's readings call our attention to.

In my reflection, I will lean heavenly on the Gospel with some inputs from the Pastoral Letter for the 2025 season of Advent issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC).

Three themes emerge from the Gospel: the certainty of the Lord's return, the hiddenness of its timing, and the kind of life befitting those who await him with longing.

The evangelist, Matthew, places the Lord's return within the broad sweep of salvation history. His comparison with the days of Noah is not a condemnation of ordinary human joys. Eating, drinking and marrying are part of the rhythm of life, yet they revealed a deeper inattentiveness—a failure to recognize the urgency of God's call. Noah's generation lived as if tomorrow were secured by routine. Only those who heeded the warning with disciplined resolve found life. The Gospel thus teaches that genuine expectation rearranges one's priorities, challenges complacency and invites a renewed vigilance of heart. We are thus warned not to become so immersed in time so as to forget eternity. We must not let worldly affairs, no matter how necessary they are, distract us from things pertaining to God and eternity.

There is a striking difference between the account of the flood and the second coming of the Lord: Noah knew the precise day of the flood, but the disciples of Christ received no such timetable. The Lord's coming will be

as sudden as a thief's visit—not in malice, but in unpredictability. The main weapon of a thief is surprise; he does not announce the time of his arrival. For this reason, a householder who has valuables in his house must always be on guard against thieves. Since we do not know when the Lord is coming, we must always keep watch.

There is often the temptation to think that we have plenty of time, but as the saying goes “those who wait for the 11th hour die at the 10:30 hour”. Postponing to live the best version of our life as Christians “here and now” because we think there is plenty of time to put things to right before the Lord comes is not a good Christian attitude. That attitude leads to disaster.

There is a fable which tells of three apprentice devils who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to Satan, the chief of the devils, about their plans to tempt and ruin men. The first said, “I will tell them there is no God.” Satan said, “That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God.” The second said, “I will tell men there is no hell.” Satan answered, “You will deceive no one that way; men know even now that there is a hell for sin.” The third said, “I will tell men there is no hurry.” “Go,” said Satan, “and you will ruin them by the thousand.”

The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time. As Christians we must always stay awake and be on the watch. Matthew does not limit the object of this watchfulness, suggesting instead a multifaceted attentiveness. First, we must watch over our interior life. Advent calls for self-examination that is honest, humble and transformative. Second, we are to remain alert to the needs of our neighbor, for Christ often comes to us in those who seek mercy, justice or companionship. Third, we must keep our eyes fixed on Christ himself, lest the illusions of the age – comfort without commitment, and prosperity without virtue – lead us astray.

The second reading sums up how we can stay awake and prepare ourselves for the Lord's coming. It tells us to wake from sleep ... and throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. We are asked to conduct ourselves properly as in the day. More importantly, it exhorts us to put on Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. When we do this, we will always be prepared for the coming of the Lord. May the Lord find us vigilant when he returns!

