

# The First Sunday of Advent: The Call to Watch!



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear Parishioners and Visitors,

Welcome to **Advent 2020!!** What a strange time we live in now! The words of Jesus in today's gospel seem very appropriate to many of us in this time of COVID 19 pandemic: Be watchful! Be alert! As we experience today the First Sunday of Advent at the end of November, there will be two messages that we will hear over the next four Sundays. One message and set of values will come to us from the media and the shops. We will be told that we will have to move faster, stay busy, queue longer in the shops and spend more money on those 'must have' presents so that we will have the 'perfect' Christmas, as if such a thing exists. We will be told and sold the idea that unless we buy more and more and surround ourselves with all the trappings of Christmas, we won't be happy. This most definitely is not true. However, there is a very different message and set of values that will be offered to us through the gospels, the prayers and the liturgy of Advent. We are being asked to prepare a way for the Lord, to stay awake, be watchful, be alert, to make a straight path for the Lord and to get ourselves ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus. This most definitely is Good News!

The message of Advent is an invitation, and it also a challenge to us. We are called to be looking forward, to be ready, to be prepared and we are asked to wait in joyful hope.

Waiting is not something that we are usually good at these days. Our modern world tells us to move faster in so many ways. We have smart phones, emails, computers and the latest technology that all 'help' us to get through our busy days. However, Advent asks each of us to do the very opposite. During these sacred days of preparation, we are being asked to take some time to be still and silent as we prepare ourselves deeply for Christmas. While we can't simply ignore the shops, the media and the advertisements over the next few weeks, neither can we ignore the words and message of Jesus in today's gospel: "You do not know when the Lord of the house is coming, whether in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning. May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to all: **Watch!**"

If we get too caught up in the shopping and spending, there is the danger that we will miss what Advent is really about. This is what the call to 'watch' means. We are asked not to miss the next four weeks of Advent. We are asked to prepare and get ready as best we can as followers of Jesus.

Have a Blessed Advent 2020!

*Fr. Rafal Ligenza*

St. Joseph Parish Administrator