

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, December 1, 2024
First Sunday of Advent
Cycle C

I heard a man share an eye-opening story during a TV interview. He said, “My phone is like my shadow – it’s always with me.” Every time it buzzed, he felt compelled to check it. He admitted this habit consumed him, even during meals, conversations, and prayer. Then came a moment of truth: his young daughter asked him, “Daddy, why is your phone more important than me?” Those words pierced his heart. It was a wake-up call that made him realize he was so distracted by what was urgent that he was neglecting what was truly important.

Like that man, we too can become so absorbed in the distractions of daily life that we lose sight of what matters most – our relationship with God. Jesus’ words in today’s gospel reading are a spiritual wake-up call, urging us to silence the noise of the world. The Lord asks us to guard our hearts, and reconnect with him as we prepare for his coming. It is said, “The world shouts, but God whispers. To hear him, we must quiet the noise.” Indeed, we need to turn down the volume of worldly distractions and diversions so we can hear God’s voice. Let us heed these words from Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.”

In today’s gospel reading, Jesus warns us to stay spiritually vigilant amidst life’s distractions. He speaks of signs in the heavens, distress among nations,

and fear gripping people. Yet, in the middle of this chaos, Jesus gives us a powerful image of hope: “Stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand. Jesus assures us that his coming will not bring fear but redemption to those who remain faithful. However, he also warns, “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life.” This warning feels especially relevant in our fast-paced, overcommitted world. The demands of work, family, and constant notifications from our phones can consume us, leaving little room for God.

Advent challenges us to pause, reflect, and realign our priorities so we can be ready for Christ’s return. Advent marks the beginning of a new liturgical year – a season of expectation and preparation. It is like an alarm clock for our spiritual lives, reminding us that Christ will come again. Not only do we prepare to celebrate his birth at Christmas, but we also look forward to his return at the end of time. Jesus’ call to vigilance does not mean living in fear. Instead, it is an invitation to live with hope – the hope that even in life’s challenges, God’s promises remain unshaken. The hope that Christ will come to establish his Kingdom of justice and peace.

This is the essence of Christian hope. It is not wishful thinking or blind optimism; it is a deep confidence in God’s faithfulness. Just as he kept his promise to send a Savior, he will keep his promise to return and make all things new.

Again, Advent invites us to set aside life's distractions and focus on what truly matters: our relationship with Christ. Jesus is coming. We do not know the day or the hour, but we do know this: he comes not to condemn but to redeem.

His coming is a message of hope. Let us silence the "buzzing" distractions of the world and live with our eyes fixed on Christ.