

NOVEMBER 26/27, 2016

First Sunday of Advent

1. The Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect. Good stewards know that they are accountable to God for all they have and are, and they strive to live in readiness for His coming.
2. On this first Sunday of Advent Jesus urges his disciples to stay awake and prepare themselves for the Lord's coming. Good stewards prepare themselves and await Christ's judgment in joyous expectation. This kind of attitude requires genuine spiritual maturity, the kind that is cultivated by prayer, participation in the sacraments, loving attention to family and one's communion of faith, and love of one's neighbor. Are we prepared for the Lord's second coming? Are we ready to receive Christ? Are we ready to look joyously for Christ's judgment?
3. ***"So too, you also must be prepared, for at the hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."*** Women do not carry large purses with at least one of every item they or their children may possibly need because they like carrying heavy objects or exercising their biceps. They learn from experience that it is better to have something and not need it, than to need something and not have it. Large planes and spaceships have redundant mechanical and electrical systems in the event one fails. This reflects the Boy Scouts' motto: "Be prepared!" Jesus understood that. He taught His followers and us to "Be prepared!" But what for? The simple answers are, "Just about anything" or "Whatever life brings us." Jesus did not know what specifically each of us would face, but he knew that if we loved God with our whole heart, mind, soul and strength, and loved our neighbor as ourselves we would be ready to use all of the talents, abilities and gifts God has given us, to the best of our ability, for our own benefit and the benefit of others. That is being prepared. Advent is a great time to get better prepared.
OR ***"So, too, you must always be prepared, for an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."*** ***Matthew 24:37-44*** As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace we might do well to contemplate that moment when we actually meet Jesus face to face. Imagine that you are told that Jesus will come to meet you. You are taken to a vast open field and told that Jesus will approach from a certain direction. You train your eyes on the horizon and wait. Then, in the far distance, you see a figure moving toward you. As the figure gets closer you begin to make out some features, such as height, gait, clothing, and more. As the person steadily walks closer, you can make out hair color and facial features. Suddenly, you realize that you know this person. It is someone you encountered who was in need of your assistance. There are two possibilities. You did help this person or you did not. Knowing it is Jesus who approaches, what do you hope you did? We must always be prepared, for at an hour we do not expect, the Son of Man will come to us.