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28 SUNDAY

First Sunday of ADVENT

Isaiah 2: 1 - 5  
Ps 121: 1-2, 4-9  
Romans 13: 11 - 14  
Matt 24: 37 - 44

We've seen the suddenness and unpredictability of floods in many places this year, and how unprepared people were. For the usual and expected phenomena of nature it's possible to be prepared, but how can you prepare for the once-in-a-lifetime extreme occurrences ?

As this year's Advent begins, there's a special topicality about our gospel reading for today. "In those days before the flood", Jesus said, people were just carrying on their ordinary way of life, uncaring even though they had been warned about the coming disaster. But His word to us, to stay awake, is about something much more dramatic and life-changing than any natural phenomenon. And no one knows the timing of it. St Paul's letter re-inforces for us this message of wakefulness, for the new day is closer now than when we first believed.

Being prepared and attentive is the call of the Advent season each year. These short weeks are a graced reminder of the "Coming" which is now the whole of our lives and indeed the world's life. But we have a great challenge: how to give witness to this, amid the frenzy of the overlapping weeks of pre-Christmas commercial advertising and people hurriedly preparing for the festival, which may remind us of the "busy-ness" of people in those days of Noah.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, the coming of the Lord would be a time of peace when His people would walk in His ways, in the light of the Lord. Jesus has come, has brought His peace. But Jesus is still coming today. And He is to come again for the final reconciliation of creation and of all peoples with God. Maranatha ! Come, Lord Jesus!