



## 1st Sunday of Advent



**Date:** Sunday, November 30, 2025 | **Season:** Advent | **Year:** A

**First Reading:** Isaiah 2:1–5

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 122:1–9 | **Response:** I rejoiced when I heard them say: ‘Let us go to God’s house.’

**Second Reading:** Romans 13:11–14

**Gospel Acclamation:** Psalm 85:8

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 24:37–44

**Preached at:** The Jesuit Institute in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa.

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**D**ear friends in Christ, this Advent season begins with a simple truth: it teaches us to notice the first light of God’s coming and to walk toward it with honest, steady hearts. Everything we hear today points us toward that light.

Our first reading from Isaiah gives us a picture to guide us for the whole of Advent. Isaiah sees a mountain rising above the hills, and all the nations walking towards it. His own name means God saves, and his vision was born in a time of uncertainty and fear. Yet he stands before the people and tells them that God is still calling the world forward. Ancient Jewish teachers liked to remind pilgrims that Jerusalem sits high on a ridge. You always go up to reach it. The climb became a prayer in itself, each step a quiet act of hope. In Advent we join that slow climb. Through the four Sundays we move from longing to fulfilment, from promise to welcoming the child in Bethlehem.

Isaiah’s vision also speaks to our local landscape. Many of our neighbours face rising prices, fragile incomes, and a lingering sense that life is uphill. Isaiah does not pretend otherwise. He simply lifts our gaze. He says that God teaches people to make peace, that weapons can become tools for planting, and that the world can be healed when we learn God’s ways. We know that Dignity, justice and care for the vulnerable are not optional extras; they are steps up the mountain, shaping a society where peace can take root.

Our Psalm sings out: I rejoiced when I heard them say, Let us go to God's house. We can easily imagine the scene. Pilgrims arriving at the gates, tired but glad, their voices rising in a simple prayer: peace within your walls. The psalm does not demand instant solutions. It invites desire. Desire for peace in our homes. Desire for peace in our townships and cities. Desire for peace where daily life can feel tense or uncertain. In Advent, this desire becomes our prayer.

St. Paul takes that desire and turns it into action. The night is almost over, he says. The day is near. Paul is giving us the picture of dawn. The liminal world is still dim, yet light is coming. So dress for the day, not the night. Put on the armour of light. Put on Christ. This is very close to Ignatius's way of praying: begin each day by picturing Christ looking at you with love, and then choose how you will walk with him. Paul calls us to make choices that look like the day rather than the darkness. Choices shaped by honesty, mercy and respect for those we meet.

The Gospel from Matthew draws all of this together. Jesus recalls the days of Noah. He explains that people were living ordinary lives and did not notice what was coming. Noah did. Not because he was clever, but because he listened. Rabbinic tradition remembers Noah as a man who stayed close to God even when others drifted. Jesus invites us to that same watchfulness. Keep awake, he says. Not because danger lurks, but because God comes quietly. God comes in the needs around us. God comes in moments that call for patience or courage. God comes when we choose compassion instead of indifference. Advent watchfulness is not anxious. It is generous. It means we refuse to sleepwalk through our days.

This is especially real for us in our local setting, where people carry many burdens. Advent does not ignore these struggles. It simply says: Prepare your hearts; do not give your heart to despair. Pay attention. Act where you can. Offer kindness where you are able. Stand with those who feel forgotten. Small acts of justice and mercy become small openings through which the light of God enters our world.

So Advent begins with a mountain rising in the light. In the weeks ahead we will hear other voices: John the Baptist calling us to prepare the way; Mary and Joseph showing us trust; and finally the quiet cry of a newborn child. But today

we take the first step into this season. We wake up. We look up. We walk together toward the One who comes.

As you pray this week, imagine yourself on Isaiah's road. Feel the early light. Hear the footsteps of others beside you. Know that Christ walks with you on this climb.

I invite you to reflect:

- Where is God inviting me to wake up and take one honest step toward the light today?
- What simple act of peace or justice can I offer in my family, my community or my country during Advent?
- How will I put on Christ each morning so that his compassion, not my fear or frustration, guides my actions?

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.