

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: NOVEMBER 27, 2016

Today, we begin a new Year of Worship with the celebration of the first Sunday of Advent.

At the beginning of this New Year of Worship, the Church, through prophet Isaiah in the first reading, invites all of us to continue to persevere in our faith in God, who is our true source of life, and to learn and practice his teaching.

**“Come, let us climb the Lord’s mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may instruct us in his ways, and we may walk in his paths.”**

Isaiah calls the people to return to God, their one true source of life.

The Church wants all of us to walk in the light of God’s word throughout this New Year of worship. Walking in the light of God’s word will bring us an amazing transformation. It will give us an inner peace and we will become peacemakers.

Again, the Church encourages us to participate actively in all the liturgical celebrations and other activities of the Church. We should not drag our feet when it is time to come together to worship. Let us always go rejoicing to the house of the Lord as the psalmist tells today. Let us put God at the center of our lives. Let us put him at the center of all that we do and say.

The point is, throughout the Advent season and the whole Year of Worship let us open our hearts to God’s grace and directions and persevere in our faith. Let us remember that by our own effort we cannot overcome our challenges and difficulties.

Jesus in the gospel reading wants us to go through the Year of Worship watchful and always be prepared for his coming. He calls each of us to a state of readiness. He does not want us to be distracted by the ordinary demands of life.

Jesus stresses this point in the gospel by referring to what happened in the days of Noah.

“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man”.

The people in the days of Noah were distracted by the ordinary demands of life: eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage so they did not have time to think of the sudden end that was approaching them. The great flood took them by surprise.

The coming of the Son of Man will be unexpected. At the coming of Christ THOSE WHO made God their true source of life and walked in the light of his instruction will be taken, while those unprepared and were distracted by the demands of life will be left to their doom. If we persevere in our faith in spite of the challenges we face as Christians we will not be afraid of death or the second coming of the Lord. We will joyfully embrace it as the beginning of a new life in God.

To conclude, I will say if we slept in the just ended Year of Worship let us wake up as St Paul tells us in the second reading.

**“It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.”**

Let us be active, up and doing what the Gospel prescribes and commit to living in and for Christ throughout the Advent season and the whole Year of Worship.

I wish all of you a fruitful Advent Season.