

## **Introduction to the First Sunday of Advent (Cycle C): Stay Awake and Prepare**

The First Sunday of Advent ushers us into a season of watchfulness and hope. The readings remind us of God's unfailing promise to bring salvation to His people, a promise fulfilled in Christ and one we anticipate in its fullness at His second coming.

In **Jeremiah 33:14-16**, the prophet speaks of a time when God will fulfill His covenant by raising up a righteous branch from David's line, ensuring justice and righteousness on earth. This promise kindles hope as we prepare our hearts for Christ, the fulfillment of that prophecy.

The psalmist in **Psalms 25** echoes the longing for God's guidance, mercy, and truth, asking the Lord to teach us His ways so that we may walk rightly in His love and faithfulness.

In **1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2**, St. Paul urges us to grow in love for one another and to lead lives pleasing to God. It's a call to holiness—a preparation not only for Christmas but for the ultimate encounter with Christ at His return.

Finally, in **Luke 21:25-28, 34-36**, Jesus foretells cosmic signs that will accompany His second coming. He urges us to *stay awake, vigilant, and prayerful*, so we may stand secure when He returns in glory.

Imagine a lighthouse keeper on a dark, stormy night. His task is to ensure the light shines brightly, guiding ships to safety. He cannot afford to sleep or neglect his duty, for lives depend on his vigilance.

In this Advent season, we too are like that lighthouse keeper. Christ is the Light we are entrusted to keep burning, both in our hearts and in the world. As we await His coming, let us remain watchful, preparing a straight path for Him with lives of love, prayer, and readiness. The storms of life may come, but those who keep their gaze on Christ will never be lost.

Let us "stand erect and raise our heads," for our redemption is near! (Luke 21:28)