FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - NOVEMBER 30, 2025

We call something “sacred” or “holy” when we’ve set it aside for the worship of God.

For instance, buildings like this church we are in can be holy because they are used primarily for Mass and other liturgical services. We call the altar, the tabernacle, the chalice, and the other things we use during Mass “sacred” because they help us to worship God. They have no other purpose than to be used at Mass.

Spaces can be holy, things can be holy, and people can be holy. Another thing that we can call “sacred” or “holy” is time.

When we say that “time” is holy, we mean that it is an occasion for us to remember some aspect of our faith in a more focused way and to receive special graces that are available for that time.

For instance, before he passed away, Pope Francis started the Jubilee Year of Hope. He made the whole year a sacred time to focus on the virtue of hope and receive the pardon of our sins. Also, we have many holy days throughout the year. Good Friday, Easter, and Pentecost are just some examples of days that we set aside as sacred commemorations of all that Jesus did to save us.

In the Church, we also have whole seasons that are holy. That is, they are set aside for us to worship God with even more intensity and to grow in our faith. Today, we are beginning one of those sacred seasons - the Season of Advent.

This season is a holy time, set aside to worship God in preparation for the celebration of Jesus’ birth on Christmas Day. We are invited to spend more time in prayer, come to church more often, and make sacrifices throughout these four weeks so that we will grow in love for Jesus who came to earth as a child to save us.

Time is one of our greatest treasures. However, it is one that we are all too willing to waste. For some reason, we always think we have plenty of it. We put things off because we believe there will be plenty of time later to get it done.

The truth is that none of us knows just how much time we have. God willing, we really have as much as we think we do. But at any minute, our time could run out. There is just no way of knowing.

It may be tempting for us at the beginning of Advent to say to ourselves, “There are four weeks of Advent. I have plenty of time to get ready for Jesus.” Then, before you know it, those weeks have flown by and we have not prepared our hearts to welcome our God.

Let’s not let that happen this year. Time goes by quickly. Let’s not waste it.

In today's second reading, Saint Paul urges us - "It is now the hour to wake from sleep.... The night is far spent, the day draws near." In those first few centuries of the Church, baptism was often described as waking up from death into life. Just as you might pour water on someone to wake them up, so baptism was seen as waking the dead soul up to live in the light of Christ. So, Saint Paul is calling us to wake up, to realize that our time is short, to stop sleepwalking through life, and to take our baptismal calling seriously.

Jesus picks up on this idea in today's gospel. He talks about how in Noah's time, people were going about their business, all the while unaware that the flood was coming. Like many of us, they thought they had plenty of time. They had no idea that their lives were about to be cut short. It wasn't that they weren't warned. It wasn't that they didn't know they had to change. They just thought there was no rush. How wrong they were.

We don't want to be like them. It is the hour for us to wake from sleep. This is a precious, sacred time that we are beginning. Let's not waste it. Instead, let's make the most of it.

The first step to doing so is to start making a habit of daily prayer. If we are not already spending some time in prayer every day, then this Advent Season gives us the opportunity to do so. If we are already praying every day, then this is a great time to increase the time we do set aside for God.

When I ask people about their prayer lives, the response I usually get is that they don't have enough time to pray. Then, in the next sentence, they tell me about all the shows they have been streaming or all the news they've seen on social media. If everyone has so much time to spend consuming entertainment, then they should have no problem finding time for prayer.

One thing I would invite you to try this week is to write down what you spend your time on. How long did you watch television or scroll through social media? How much time did you spend at work or at school? How much time did you spend sleeping? Then, when you've seen where your time has gone, find places where you could fit prayer in. It might be in the few minutes between the time you get up and the time you make breakfast. It might be while you are on a break at work. Or, you might find that there are some ways you're wasting time that would be better spent meditating on God's word. That would be a great way to prepare for Advent and to make sure that we are keeping watch for Jesus who comes to meet us at a time and a place that we least expect.

This Advent Season is a sacred time. It is set aside to worship the God who never ceases to reach out to us with His love. Let's not let this time slip through our hands! It is now the hour. If we can welcome Jesus who invites us to set aside time to spend with Him, we will be that much ready to meet Him when our time finally runs out.