

First Sunday of Advent:

# Be prepared

Mt. 24:37-44



## The 4 stars of Advent



### **The star of preparation**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

**Be prepared because  
the son of man is coming.**

(Mt 24,37-44)

### **The star of choice**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

**The kingdom of heaven  
is at hand.**

(Mt 3,1-12)

### **The star of perplexity**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

**Are you the one  
who is to come?**

(Mt 11,2-11)

### **The star of mystery**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday

**They shall name him  
Emmanuel.**

(Mt 1,18-25)

The very meaning of the word “advent” (from the Latin *adventus* = arrival, coming) offers us the perspective that every Christian should strive to adopt during this season. In fact, all of Sacred Scripture speaks to us about the continual “advents” of God in human history—comings that find their complete fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus, God is an eternal pilgrim along the highways of the world, patiently but insistently knocking on the doors of our hearts. But for each of us personally, who is the One who comes? (In the Greek version of the text, the verb “to come” is used in the present tense, not the future.) Our honest answer to this question will point us in the right direction, which leads to God and our brothers and sisters. Advent is a time of searching, vigilance, discernment. If we expect the One who is coming to protect us, solve our problems, remove any obstacles and sufferings from our lives and at the same time absolve us from the hard work of believing and of loving and forgiving others wholeheartedly... then Advent is meaningless.

In chapter 24 of his Gospel, Matthew tells us to “be prepared” (Greek version: “continue to be prepared”) and then proceeds almost immediately to recount the Lord’s Passion. Why? Aren’t we supposed to be heading toward Christmas—a time birth, celebration, joy, gifts? Of course! In fact, we are urged to rejoice profoundly because the One who comes is the Lord Jesus who, born on a specific day and hour in Bethlehem (which in Hebrew means “house of bread”), offered human beings the highest proof of his love by “breaking the bread of his life” for us on the cross of rejection and hate. Jesus “prepared himself” all his life to open the doors of the world once and for all to the God who comes.



## Prayer

*Lord Jesus,  
teach us to recognize you in all the events of our life.  
Help us remain alert and ready to meet you  
wherever you await us  
in the mysterious flow of our days.  
Gird us with the belt of your truth.  
Light our lamps with the oil of your mercy  
so that even the darkest night  
will be illuminated by the bright star of your coming.  
Amen.*