

November 29, 2020
1st Sunday of Advent (B)
Is 63:16-17, 19; 64:2-7
Ps 80:2-3,15-16,18-19
1 Cor 1:3-9
Mk 13:33-37

TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN US!

Would you leave or entrust your home to a stranger? Obviously, we will not entrust our property to a stranger. To do so is foolishness/recklessness. Rather, we will leave our home to someone we trust and have confidence with like a family member or a close friend. We expect the person we entrust our house-key will take care of our home while we are away. When we return home we look forward to seeing our property in good shape and well taken care of. Otherwise, we will be upset for the person we trusted did not live up to our expectation.

In our gospel proclaimed we hear Jesus shares a parable to his disciples. In the parable Jesus uses the image of a master-landowner who went abroad and left his home to his servants. We have to understand that wealthy master-landowner travels a lot during that time for business ventures and leisure. Hence, it is very important for the master-landowner to have servants who are trustworthy/dependable. Trust and confidence in his servants gives him, the master-landowner, the freedom to travel. He expects his servants, though, that while he is away they will remain loyal and faithful in doing their work. When he comes back home and finds them doing so, he rewards them accordingly.

Most of the time, the master-landowner leaves home without letting his servants know when he will come back. Therefore, the absence of the master-landowner would be a test/trial for the servants. The servants are challenged to be always on guard for the arrival of their master-landowner. The servants have to ask themselves frequently: **Would I relax while my master is away and when I hear of his return I will just quickly get things in order? Or would I just do faithfully my work day by day and be ready for his return anytime?** The trouble/danger with relaxing (putting one's feet up), when the master-landowner is away, is the reality that he comes back unannounced. Therefore, the morally right posture of waiting for the master-landowner's return is not inactivity nor being reactive. Instead, it must be a proactive, energetic, joyful, faithful, and eager waiting for the master-landowner's home-coming.

The master-landowner is our Lord Jesus and we are the servants. Our Master, Jesus Christ, trusts us. He has confidence in us. While he is away, though, he expects us to do faithfully our responsibilities and remain loyal to him. He is counting on us to share the Good News to others. He is hoping that we are doing the mission he entrusted to us. He is hoping that the gifts of time, talent and treasure he gives us will be used for the greater glory of his name. He yearns to see us patiently and actively waiting for him. When he comes back again, he is looking forward to see us awake, alert and eager to welcome him back.

We are starting today the new liturgical year. It is now the Season of Advent. This season is a special time for us to examine ourselves as servants preparing for the return of the Master. This season gives us the opportunity to reflect on our personal relationship with God. This season is not only a time for 'soul-searching' but also 'soul-shining' in the midst of darkness around. And

so we ask ourselves: As a servant, **do I carry faithfully my Catholic Christian responsibilities? Do I share the Good News of Jesus to others every day? Do I help my family recognized their mission as disciples of Christ? Am I eager, ready and joyful in anticipating my Master, Jesus Christ, home-coming?**

The 1st Advent candle we lighted symbolizes **hope**. Hope is one of the theological virtues. As Catholic Christians, we are reminded by that shining light who we are – **we are people of hope**. We are not people of despair. We hold on to hope especially during this very stressful time in our history brought about by this pandemic. We rest in hope for we believe that God is still in control of the situation. We will not give in to hopelessness rather we are looking forward to be in eternal union with God one day. St. Clement of Alexandria reminds us of the beauty of hope that Christ Jesus offers us when he said: **"If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes."**

Some years ago a tourist visited the Castle Villa Asconti on the shores of Lake Como in Northern Italy. Only the old gardener opened the gates and the visitors stepped into the garden, which was perfectly kept. One of the visitors asked when was the last time the owner was there. The old gardener replied, **"Twelve years ago, Sir."** **"Did he ever write or call you?"** asked the visitor. **"No, Sir."** **"Where then do you get instructions from?"** The old gardener answered, **"From his agent in Milan, Sir."** **"But, you keep the grounds as though your master were coming back tomorrow."** The old gardener quickly replied, **"Today, Sir, today."**

Like the old gardener, **do we devotedly/consistently exerting effort on deepening our faith as though our Master, Jesus Christ, would return this very day? Will our Master find us 'watchful' when he comes today? Or will he find us 'sleeping on the job?'**

As we continue our celebration, we hope and pray that when our Master, Jesus Christ, comes again may he find us joyful and faithful doing our responsibilities as baptized Catholic Christians. May he find us building a better world and forming more Christian disciples beginning with our children.

God bless us all!