

Homily for First Sunday of Advent
December 14, 2008

Introduction

It strikes me as felicitous, providential, serendipitous that Advent 2008 comes while we are in the midst of our current economic crisis. That might sound counter-intuitive - even cruel. But I believe the idea has some merit.

I

Advent holds out to us a very different motive for confidence, hope, security. The story of a God who promised a Savior, and then made good on that promise, and who tells us now that we must be alert for the time when that Savior returns in glory - this is why I'm convinced that we have in this Advent Season of 2008 a great opportunity to get it right.

The usual motives for security and hope - money, savings, retirement plans, etc. etc. have melted away from so many. We're left with the solid fact of Christ's first coming and the promise of his Second Coming as our one outstanding reason for hope.

II

In addition, Advent is such a lovely season:

- lived through shortened days and long December nights (in our northern hemisphere)
- aware that another calendar year is fast ending - that time is moving forward
- encountering the two great figures of this liturgical time: John the Baptist and Mary, Jesus' Mother.

Everything comes together to inspire our full participation in these weeks of waiting, of anticipation, of Hope.

III

And we are in God's time through Advent - today's Gospel says is to well and so repeatedly: be watchful, be alert, don't be caught asleep, "what I say to you, I say to all, watch".(Matt. 13:37)

Conclusion

If we can hold these two thoughts in our minds simultaneously:

the current precarious economic situation

the conviction that all will be well because He has come and will come again

then we will have acquired true security.

Let me leave you with some thrilling words from the old Prophet Habakkuk, words which sum up much of what I've tried to say here:

"write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it for it will surely come. It will not delay". (Habakkuk 2:2-3)