Homily for the 1st Sunday of Advent(12/1/2019)

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 Today, we begin the season of Advent: a quiet prelude before the brightness of Christmas. The word ‘Advent,’ of course, means ‘coming.’ So, in Advent, we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ. We commemorate His coming at Bethlehem two thousand years ago and His coming to our hearts. In this season, the Church urges us to open our hearts to receive Him with faith, hope, and love.

 You know? Millions of Americans suffer from insomnia. That’s not good. But, Jesus tells us to “stay awake.” What that means? “Stay awake.” We know that Jesus is not literally commanding a lack of pillow time. Instead, Jesus is saying, “Wake up! Look around! Be aware!”

 Don’t go through life like a sleepwalker, without seeing or noticing what’s going on all around us. It is time for us to open not only our eyes, but also our spirit so that we can be aware of how God is moving and guiding us through our lives.

 We need to stay alert so that we can notice God at work in our midst. Advent is a time to wake up our spirits so that we can be aware of God’s presence in our lives. So, the readings today tells us to ‘stay awake,’ to ‘be prepared’ because we do not know the day or hour the Lord is coming to get us.

 Each of our readings today describe dark days: dark times for the Hebrew people and dark days for Christians.

 In the midst of catastrophic times, better times are promised. Each ways, God has not forgotten us. God promises, God always is faithful. Better days are ahead. Stay on course, keep the faith!

 Advent reminds us to be aware that the God who came into the world as a baby so many years ago still wishes to enter our lives today. So, the Gospel of Matthew insists, “You must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come. ”

 Advent is not a time to just wait for Christmas to happen, but a time to prepare for Christmas and the coming of Christ into our life with new power.

 Advent is a time not simply to imitate how our parents celebrated Christmas, but to decide how we will celebrate Christmas this year in a special way.

 However, we are too busy and our minds are too occupied without even noticing we push away Jesus. Too often, we find ourselves like the innkeepers who turn away the Christ in Bethlehem, saying, “No room for you.” Our minds are full, our calendars are packed, our expectations are low, so we are not actively looking and seeking for the living Christ in our midst. We may say to Jesus who wants to enter our minds, “Sorry, there is no room for you.” Then, Jesus cries, “Wake up. It’s Me.”

 Advent comes with the invitation to open our hearts and minds to the arrival of Christ. If Jesus knocks on the door of our lives, we want to be awake enough to invite Him inside. During the coming week, let us embrace a spiritual attitude, so the Season of Advent may become something special for us.

 The extraordinary good news of Advent is that God chose to be with us. God entered into our world and into our lives. The bad news is that we are often unaware of this miracle. The season of Advent can be a time when we take Jesus’ call to “wake up” to heart.

 Wake up! God is all around us. Wake up! We are not alone. Wake up! Don’t miss the blessings that are right here. Wake up! God is Emmanuel. He is always with us.

 Do you see God, right here, right now? Wake up! The Savior has come, He is coming, and He will always come!