



Advent is such a wonderful time of year! It is a season of hope, expectation, and preparation. We, as human beings, desperately need to express our longing for Jesus to come—He alone can satisfy our hungry hearts; He is our hope! As surely as He came 2000 years ago as a simple, humble, child in the womb of Mary, so we know with certainty He will come again: God is FAITHFUL! Advent is a privileged time to prepare ourselves to welcome Jesus into our hearts and minds, to make room for Him, when at last He comes!

In this Sunday's Gospel (Mt 24:37-44), Jesus says we are like a man who owns a house and has to guard it against a thief who is always lurking to break-in and rob him when he least expects. What is Jesus saying to us? The "house" is our soul and the treasure we must guard from the thief (the Devil) is the indwelling presence of God—our greatest possession! In the Second Reading, St. Paul exhorts us to guard our "house" and protect our treasure: "Stay awake! Cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light!"

Of course, throughout our lives we must battle to cast off deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light; yet, I would like to encourage two simple ways we can prepare ourselves

for the coming of the Lord this Advent. First, I would like to encourage everyone to make a good Confession during this season of grace and mercy. Jesus waits for us to come to Him in this Sacrament; He delights in us when we humble ourselves and turn away from our sins. What better way is there to cast off our deeds of darkness?! Secondly, I would like to encourage every person, every family, to schedule time for prayer each day. Jesus wants to be close to us, to protect us from evil and temptation which will inevitably come. Only through Him can we guard our "house" and protect the great divine treasure we carry in these earthen vessels (2 Cor 4:7). This Advent, let us be resolved to wait for Him in prayer each day. Let us make room for Him in our busy lives! Come, let us adore Him! Just a few minutes each day with Jesus can profoundly change our lives! Perhaps, we could pray a decade of the rosary, or read a passage of Scripture, or just say, "Lord Jesus, thank You for coming to us and for us; thank You for being here. Help me to know Your loving presence and to be faithful to You today." It's not rocket science! Our hearts must communicate with His! I believe the effort to sacrifice some time, step out in faith, and call out to Him will not go unrewarded. This is one way for us to put on the armor of light and stay awake for His coming!

This time of Advent is a privileged time for us to draw nearer to God. Certainly, He wants to draw nearer to us! Let us be attentive to the words of Jesus: "Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Frequent Confession and daily prayer are two of the essential weapons we need to guard our spiritual house from the lurking thief who comes to steal kill and destroy (Jn 10:10) – how can we afford NOT to make use of them?

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples

