

Homily Outline for the 1st Sunday of Advent - Cycle B
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
December 3, 2023

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- I. Our Advent journey begins today!
 - A. There was an interesting journey about 200 years ago in the United States when Thomas Jefferson sent the now-famous Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on a journey of discovery. They were to look for a shortcut: a route to the riches of the Orient.
 - B. After months and months of rugged, dangerous travels, they came to the Rocky Mountains. Happily, they believed that the passage they sought would be just beyond this mountain. They reached the top, and what did they see? Miles and miles of additional mountains to cross!
 - C. Despite the disappointment, they were ready and prepared to go on. It would be many more hard weeks until they saw a far-reaching body of water that prompted Clark was to write in his journal. "O, the Joy!"
- II. *Advent* and *adventure* come from the same root word: to come to or come toward.
 - A. They refer equally to the journey and the arrival.
 - B. Just what did Lewis and Clark need to complete their journey?
 - C. So many of their requirements are similar to ours for our Advent journey.
- III. Today's Gospel is about our Christian journey. Its message is: Be ready, be watchful, be attentive all along the way. What will we need to complete this journey successfully?
 - A. *Commitment*: Christ provides the Church and the sacraments to sustain us.
 - B. *Wisdom*: the help of a guide and leader. We have Jesus and his Gospel to provide guidance on a journey that will have much joy in it.

- C. *Fortitude*: This virtue is essential for the journey. Fortitude is what Jesus is referring to in today's Gospel. It is about making readiness, preparedness, and strength a part of our "natural state." This comes only with practice, prayer, and repetition.
 - D. *Teamwork*: Many people do not recall that Lewis and Clark had 33 intrepid members in their band of explorers. They counted very much on each other's strength.
 - 1. We Christians, of course, have the whole Church and the entire Communion of Saints to offer help – not to mention our own local faith community here in our diocese and in our Cathedral parish.
 - 2. Sometimes we get to be the helper; other times we need to be the one helped.
- IV. Advent is a time of "coming to" the joy of discovering our destination: eternal life with Christ in His Kingdom.
- A. It is a time to active waiting that includes preparing.
 - B. As we prepare to share Holy Communion, this foretaste and promise of the Heavenly Banquet, let us make a new commitment to stay close to Jesus and put His teachings into practice in our daily lives.
- V. May God give us this grace. Amen.