



Being Ready and Hopeful in a Time of Transition

Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming... Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour. (Matthew 24:42, 44)

Christ calls us to be aware and to be ready for His return. We await Him with hope!

November can be a month of great challenge for many of us. It is a time that recalls the great sacrifices given to preserve our freedom. It is a time that reminds of the death of things. It is a time that reminds us of our mortality. It is a time the most vulnerable amongst us fear the coming cold, the dark, and the uncertainty of basic necessities as winter approaches. November can be rough!

However, in the passage from Mathew's Gospel, to be read during the first Sunday of Advent (Nov 30th), there is a whisper of hope... we may not know *when* the Lord is coming, but we do know that *He is coming!*

With this hope in our hearts, what are we doing to prepare? As Vincentians, we do what we can to serve our neighbours in need. Christ was clear in this expectation. We need only open the Gospels to see example after example of how Jesus chooses to focus on them throughout his ministry. We can turn to the lives of the Saints and see countless lessons of good work towards our brothers and sisters in need. Now, most recently, we can look to Pope Leo XIV and his Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, to draw renewed inspiration and instruction on how we, as Christians, are called to have love for those in need. There can be no better work than this and especially at a time when this want is so keenly felt by those who are most vulnerable within and beyond our communities.

As fall turns to winter, and Advent approaches, let us prepare ourselves for the coming of the Son of Man. Let us turn our eyes to those in need with a renewed heart and marshal willingness to do what needs to be done in whatever time we have available. Let us visit those who are lonely and isolated. Let us give a smile and kind word to those we meet in the busyness of our everyday lives. Let us slow down and appreciate the changing of the seasons with gratitude in our hearts for our many blessings. Let us lend an open hand to those who we encounter, especially those in need. Now is the time to love one another in hope as we await the return of our Lord.

Psalm 122 says *For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be with you." For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.* And so to you my friends, fellow Vincentians, I say Peace be with you and let us continue to seek the good for each other and those we serve.

Reflection Questions

1. *Who are you serving as we await the return of our Lord?*
2. *How is this time of transition between fall and winter impacting you and the people around you?*
3. *Is there any help you need from others right now? Who can you ask for help?*

Let us pray... *God of Mercy and Love, be ever close to us during this time of growing darkness and cold. Support us in the work you have called us to do and give us eyes to see those most in need, hearts to hold them, hands to help them, and space to serve them. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

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About the writer: Paul is the Spiritual Director for the Particular Council of Vancouver Island, BC. A husband, father, and contemplative Catholic, he is also the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Victoria. In 2023, he joined the Society after his son asked an excellent question about those in poverty along Pandora Avenue in downtown Victoria yet he was unable to offer a good answer. They chose to pray and discern about it, and the very next day Paul received an invitation to join the SSVP's Board of Directors. He accepted on the spot and has been so very grateful that he did!

For those interested in contributing spiritual reflections, please email jose.torres@rogers.com. Also, for reflections that may be used in your group meeting's spirituality segment, please check out: [Monthly Reflections - Society of Saint Vincent de Paul - National Council of Canada](#).