

Father Dave's Weekly Homily

11/27/11 1 Advent B

-- Most of us know about the two-minute warning in football. It doesn't just let us know there are two minutes left in the game. It gives us a signal that the character of the game is changing. Time is limited. It's time to get your head into the game if you've been drifting.

-- If your team is ahead, it tells you to tighten up your defense to stop the other team from driving. If your team is behind, it tells you to pull out the stops and start using your best plays: get out that two minute drill which you've practiced all year long.

-- The Season of Advent is sort of like a two-minute warning for the followers of Jesus Christ. It tells us that we are in a critical time, the last age. Christ has come to accomplish redemption—he will come again to draw all things to himself. Will we be ready?

-- Of course, unlike a two-minute warning, Advent does not tell us exactly how long we have until the end of the game. Come to think of it, the way football is played today, with timeouts, penalties and the like, the two minutes of football can get dragged out a long time.

-- In any case, we know not the day nor the hour, as much as some Christians like to think they know. (Funny, their predictions have all turned out wrong to date) But Advent isn't about predictions—it's about continual readiness for the Lord.

-- As our gospel says, our attitude should be that of the servant who does his assigned work each day, whether the master is around or not. It's the attitude of the gatekeeper who only lets in those who have a legitimate reason to be on the property.

-- Translated to our day, it means we should be caring for the earth around us, and especially the people around us. Not only should we not mistreat others, but we should help them in need.

-- It means cultivating a spirit of prayer and repentance in our personal lives. It means reconciling with others with whom we've had quarrels, and perhaps reconciling with God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

-- And in this Advent of 2011, it calls English-speaking Catholics to a greater awareness of how we pray at Mass. It's obvious this weekend that the translations of many of the prayers at Mass have changed. We've been talking about this and preparing for this for quite a number of weeks.

-- Advent readiness this year means entering into those prayers we've prayed for years with a new spirit and meaning. Use the prayer cards, not just to keep in synch with your responses, but to dwell on the meaning of the words we so often pray without thinking.

-- Readiness is an attitude of heart and mind where all we do gives praise to God. St. John Bosco once talked to a newspaper reporter at the orphanage he taught at. They happened to be in the recreation room, and he was shooting pool with one of the boys.

-- The reporter asked him what he'd do if he found out he had just a half hour to live. John Bosco simply looked up and said *I'd continue shooting pool*. He could say that honestly because he was giving glory to God by doing that.

-- Can we say the same? Are we using our spiritual gifts to lift up God's people and give glory to Him? Advent is our two-minute warning.

-- One of the new options for dismissal for Mass, which I will use today, says *Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life*. May everything we do in our lives give true glory to God.