

## A Message From Fr. Francis



My Dear Friends In Christ,

As we count down the year, preparing to enter Advent with its focus on Jesus' return, Mark is counting down the days and hours to Jesus' trial and crucifixion in this week's Gospel. We look in hope for his coming again, but can only do so because Jesus gave himself for us, and defeated the powers of sin and death on the cross, and was raised to give us new life.

Where is this world headed? And more personally, what of my own destiny in the life to come? About that day or hour we don't know. And just as well, for it would be difficult knowledge to cope with. But his message is to be ready to meet him, whenever he comes. Christ's call to be prepared is not just about waiting passively for some distant event, but about cultivating a life that is attuned to God's presence in each moment. His coming is not confined to a single future day but unfolds in countless ways throughout our lives—through moments of grace, challenges that test our faith, encounters with others, and even through our own inner struggles. In all of this, He invites us to live with an awareness of eternity, seeing the world not merely as it is but as it will be, transformed by His love and His presence.

Our vision of the last things should not sink us in gloom, or despair at our sinfulness. But the question should be asked: How ready are we? Our faith tells us that some generation in history will experience the second coming of Christ. Then a person may have but a moment to wonder: "Am I ready? Am I prepared? Even if ours is not the generation to see the second coming, still each of us must face our personal day of passing. For some it comes unexpectedly, out of the blue, even perhaps at a young age. For others it will be fairly predictable and follow the more normal course of aging. Regardless, there will be a time when each one of us must ask the question: "Am I ready? Am I prepared?" For now, we are faced with multiple choices to make each day which may seem insignificant; but they all add up pointing us in particular directions, sometimes good, sometimes less so. Are our everyday decisions helping to make us ready? Are they making us prepared?

We are called to live not just for the here and now, but with an eye on the eternal life. This life is a preparation—a school of love, humility, and holiness—for the life to come. Every act of kindness, every moment of forgiveness, every choice to live with integrity is a building block in this larger reality, a way of participating in eternal life. The invitation to be ready for His coming is, therefore, an invitation to live with purpose—alert to the gift of each day, seeking God's will in all things, and understanding that even in our most mundane activities, we are building toward something much greater. We are not merely passing through this world; we are preparing for the next. The best we can do is to live in this moment with trust, grace, and readiness—knowing that whatever comes, God is with us and that our lives are building toward a destiny beyond our imagination.

**See you at Mass!**

**Fr. Francis**

